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Ghosts of Ludlow

BY GARY COX



Located in Pueblo, Colorado, just north of the coalfields, Colorado Fuel and Iron was the largest steel mill west of the Mississippi in the early 1900s. Driving into this city of 100,000 people at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains where the foaming white water of the Arkansas River mellows as it reaches the plains, the first landmark one sees on the horizon are the smokestacks from the CF&I blast furnaces.

The Rockefeller family owned the controlling interest in this steel mill during the UMWA strike in the southern coalfields in 1913-1914. They also owned the coal mines that produced the coal that produced the coke that fed the gluttonous blast furnaces at CF&I a few miles to the north. Rockefeller's CF&I steel mill employed the same immigrants that dug the coal in the mines and treated them with the same consideration that Rockefeller gave to the miners – the whip. There were a few advantages to working in the mill. Your work space was more than 3 feet high and the gas the coal miners breathed could explode and bring instant death – but for steel workers the gas might take years to claim you.

I've never worked in a steel mill, but I worked in an iron foundry at Caterpillar Tractor in the '50s. I felt the 120-degree heat that soaks your clothes and leaves them white with salt and breathed the acrid smoke. I try to understand how much worse it must have been in the CF&I mill, without a union, 40 years earlier.

The UMWA miners and their families fought a heroic battle in their strike, which ended with the Ludlow massacre on April 20, 1914, and the angry reaction of the miners in the 10-day war that followed. They could not overcome the power of Rockefeller wealth, the politicians, the state militia, the U.S. Army, the courts and the media by themselves. The miners lost because the rest of the working class protested but without reacting with more work stoppages.

On September 22, 1919, just six years to the day after the miners walked out in 1913, the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee called for a nationwide walkout of all steel and foundry workers. This was the first attempt to organize on a national level by what would become the United Steel Workers of America. 6000 steel workers walked out of the C.F.&I. mill in Pueblo to join 350,000 other steel workers who walked off their jobs that day. Only two months later they were forced to give up. Any gathering of three or more workers was considered a "riot" by the police and was broken up. Freedom of speech and the right to assemble were rights never meant to apply to workers. Unable to communicate, the SWOC soon lost the ability to coordinate and care for 350,000 workers. The rest of the working class protested without much effective reaction and U.S. Steel won.

Between the 1920s and the 1950s our unions gained strength, primarily due to the liberalization of labor laws by President Roosevelt and others in order to prevent the worker rebellion that they feared if the capitalists could not discipline their own greed. But after the '50s the capitalists began to ratchet up their attacks on labor again. They

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Conference explores ways to revive the labor movement

Alternative forms of worker organizing

As the official labor movement continues to lose ground, many workers are experimenting with different ways to defend their interests in an increasingly vicious economy.

Nearly 150 people participated in the Alternative Forms of Worker Organizing conference held in New York City June 28-29 to begin a dialogue on how a new labor movement might be forged.

The conference was notable for the participation of activists from several workers centers and other alternative organizing projects in the New York City region, many of them immigrant workers for whom English is at best a second language, but also drew activists from across the country.

It began with a presentation by Staughton Lynd (published on page 6) offering a historical context for the conference. Lynd noted that even "reformers" in the AFL-CIO too often lack a vision of unionism that was truly democratic – let alone that embraced a broader social vision. "Another world is possible," he concluded, "let us demand it."

Activists from several workers centers, rank-and-file union activists, independent unions, community labor organizations, local industrial organizing committees, publications that provide a focus for workers in highly transitory jobs, and other groups then introduced themselves and briefly discussed their organizing projects.

This session was also addressed by an official of the new government-sponsored union federation in Venezuela, accompanied by members of the Venezuelan consular staff. Lunch followed, and many participants took advantage of the opportunity to introduce themselves to people engaged in work they found interesting and to exchange ideas.

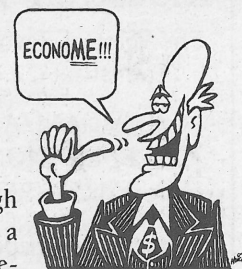
The Saturday afternoon plenary was devoted to in-depth discussion of different models for organizing. Presenters discussed the work of the Youngstown Workers Solidarity Club, IWW, New York's Restaurant Opportunities Center, Mexican-American Workers Association, the Taxi Workers Alliance, and Black Telephone Workers for Justice.

The Taxi Workers Alliance organizes New York City cabbies who have seen their jobs transformed from a commission-based system of employment to a leasing system in which they are considered independent contractors with few legal rights. noted that enormous profits are made off their labor through the interaction of the licensing and contracting system, while many drivers do not make minimum wage.

The TWA has organized citywide strikes of taxi drivers, and its organizers are a regular presence in the taxi barns and in the communities in which the drivers live. While everyone present was interested in alternative

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Happy days are here again ...



The "shallow" U.S. recession that began in March 2001 has been over for nearly two years, the National Bureau of Economic Research announced July 17. "Economy building steam," a *Boston Globe* headline proclaimed August 8. But many workers didn't notice, with unemployment hitting a nine-year high in May and, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* headlined July 30, "Pay raises expected to be smallest since mid-1970s."

Productivity is up dramatically, as we find ourselves working harder to get the work done with fewer staff. Consumer spending remains strong, as people refinance homes and build up credit card debt to keep their heads above water. New unemployment claims are down somewhat as bosses run out of workers to lay off (although nearly 400,000 U.S. workers still get pink slips each week). And official unemployment dipped slightly as millions of workers exhausted their jobless benefits and gave up on finding new jobs. (Only those actively looking for work are counted as unemployed by government statisticians.)

Things don't look much better in Canada, where the official unemployment rate is up to 7.8 percent and inflation-adjusted wages are falling.

"The job market has yet to rebound," the *Globe* concedes, "and there is no signal that businesses plan to begin hiring in large numbers." Instead, employers are cutting back on pay raises while "flogging their workers to get more out of them as a means to increase profits," according to Steven Gross of Mercer Human Resources Consulting.

Average pay raises have been running a bit ahead of the inflation rate for the last 10 years – reversing the losses of the late 1970s

and 1980s – although the average conceals a growing chasm between workers at the top and bottom of the pay scale. But the Bureau of National Affairs reports that wages are now stagnating, and unlikely to keep up with inflation over the coming year.

Still, economists – accustomed to their ivory towers where their free market theories need never collide with the actual lives of capitalism's victims – are cheery. The stock market is rising. Interest rates are on the upswing. Things are looking good for everyone except those who do the world's work.

As the July 13 *Chicago Tribune* noted, "Mainstream economists say that the nation is finally on the road to recovery. And not just any recovery, but a splendid one because of technology-driven productivity gains.

"But the revival has yet to produce any of what matters most to people – namely, jobs. The chief reason: The very productivity gains that are supposed to ensure the comeback..."

As a result, the U.S. economy has lost some 2.7 million manufacturing jobs since July 2000, in 33 straight months of decline.

Unemployment has been rising for so long that many states are running out of money for jobless benefits. California is among states considering slashing unemployment benefits in order to keep their insurance fund solvent. Only about half the state's unemployed currently receive any benefits.

However, as fewer workers do more work for longer hours for less pay, we can rest assured that corporate profits and CEO pay are looking good. Perhaps a few of our fellow workers will get jobs catering the celebrations.

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Capitalism can't be reformed

"Economy in ruins: 1.5 million workers unemployed while overtime hits epidemic levels" (July/August IW) provides many significant details about the downward spiraling economic situation of the U.S. working class. But, most importantly, at the same time it promotes reformist illusions and correspondingly does not advocate a revolutionary situation to the fundamental problems of us workers.

First, there is criticism of the U.S. Department of Labor for not taking action to alleviate some of our economic problems. But what else are we workers to expect? After all, the Department of Labor is part of the U.S. capitalist ruling class' government, serving essentially only the class interests of "our" ruling class.

Second, the article talks favorably about the economic situation of workers in Norway (and elsewhere in Europe), and gives us workers the false hope that if we were to follow their lead and struggle for a work week of less than 40 hours with no overtime allowed, that this would solve our unemployment problem. (French workers, who work considerably fewer hours per week than we do, and have a lot more vacation time as well, also have a real unemployment rate at least as high and perhaps even higher than ours, although with a better social net.)

The U.S. capitalists won't go for this, even with reformist class struggle, because they don't want to reduce hours well below 40 and hire extra workers, as this would substantially increase their total benefit costs, so they are not about to give in without a massive fight (and are in motion to increase total hours worked, with the gutting of overtime pay for masses of workers while continuing to lay off huge numbers of workers). After all, the U.S. capitalists have to somehow service the interest on the Titanic-like national debt of \$31 trillion – which will never be repaid, predominantly from the cost of past, present and fu-

ture wars. "Your tax dollars at work!"

Third, and lastly, the global capitalist recession, now pointing to the future of the impending "greatest" capitalist depression, already developing in Japan, Argentina, Brazil, etc., is such that the prospects for numerous capitalist concessions to us workers is highly unlikely – the only prospect is that of

an accelerating downward spiral into poverty or destitution. So the only real solution is the revolutionary solution of international working class, real socialist revolution – not only abolishing wage slavery and the state, but meaning "The Workplaces to the [us] Workers!," with production based on ability (and desire), and distribution based on need (and want); a classless society worldwide, without any nations, war, money, exploitation or oppression. Now that's a world worth waging revolution for!

Perry Sanders, Chicago GMB
Dave O., Chicago Haymarket General
Defense Committee Local #3

Editor's Note: I believe the fellow workers read too much into a transitional phrase; the intent was to contrast the urgent problems facing the working class today with the actions of the Labor Department, which can only aggravate the crisis – not to suggest that workers look to, or plead with, the government to improve our conditions.

At the same time, I can not agree that simply because the bosses prefer not to reduce work hours, that means there is no point in fighting to reclaim as much of our time as possible. (It is true that unemployment remains high in France, though it is significantly lower than before the work week was cut; but the government specifically crafted its shorter hours legislation to minimize the cost to employers by allowing them to annualize work weeks, speed-up production, etc.)

It is indeed impossible to make capitalism humane. But that does not mean we must accept ever-worsening conditions until the great day when we dump the bosses off our backs. The IWW was founded on the principle

that it is not only possible but necessary to simultaneously fight the bosses on the job for better conditions, and to build an organization capable of and dedicated to overturning their rotten system tomorrow (or as soon as we have gained the necessary strength).

Venezuela and the AFL-CIA

I agree with Alex Gould that Venezuelan president Chavez has made much progress for his people. It is doubtful that government-backed American Federation of Fakeers will benefit the poor people. Also, what part has the CIA had in the unrest, like in Chile in 1973 or Reagan's contras? Fellow Worker Moore's article was flawed indeed.

Leon Maclean, X324069

Solidarity a group process

Solidarity for me is by definition a group process. It is individual only in feeling. Like loyalty it is a positive emotional state but like loyalty requires others. If you can accept this argument or assumption then we can proceed to analyze solidarity.

I am not sure how many times in the past 200 years or so that the left has divided itself. The Russians did it with purges, the modern protest movement does it by being exclusive about tactics. Accusations fly and tempers rise, people are killed in purges, and the social solidarity that could be achieved is lost.

I really wish the English language did not have the accusative case. Maybe people should think before they throw blame. Maybe our legal system and media promote this attitude.

Should we accuse our fellow and sister workers? No. Even if they are wrong in our view, we should give and take within our collectives, our unions, our workplaces, our families and our neighbourhoods. We should negotiate solidarity and group cohesion.

Let's not keep arguing for our rights, or going by the rules, or arguing our cause when we are vipers at the throat and ears of our fellow workers. Give your fellow workers respect and tolerance; and take their respect, opinions and actions and build the union.

Be careful to keep the union together and not tear it apart.

Peter Timusk, Ottawa

Bush's war

Saddam Hussein was on the verge of developing nuclear weapons. This was what "defecting scientists" were saying on Fox News. According to Secretary of State Colin Powell, President Bush and others, Iraq had huge quantities of sirin, anthrax, mustard gas and smallpox. It was said many times that he was within six months of developing nuclear weapons, which to date have not been found.

There are three possibilities – which can be reduced to two: [1] The Bush administration was lying. [2] There was a monumental intelligence failure. [3] Iraq hid and/or destroyed these weapons. If we don't know what happened to these weapons this is also an intelligence failure.

So we are down to two possibilities: [A] The administration was lying. [B] There was a monumental intelligence failure.

If there was a monumental intelligence failure, this is the second monumental intelligence of the Bush administration. The other intelligence failure was of course, the failure regarding 9/11. If this is so, can you believe that George W. Bush is such a hero? And if the administration was lying, is this not an impeachable offense?

Is a lie or a monumental intelligence failure justification for getting Congress to authorize a war? The American people were lied into the Spanish-American War, lied into World War One and lied into the Vietnam War. Will we be lied into other wars to promote the agenda of neo-conservatives, and to promote economic neo-liberalism?

Bush is pursuing what is perhaps the greatest anti-labor agenda since Grover Cleveland. Now it includes trying to severely limit overtime pay.

George Orwell said a war can be used as an excuse for telling workers that they cannot have a raise. Bush was using what Iraq was supposed to have [see above] as an excuse for busting the West Coast Longshoremen's union. After all, how can they strike when our soldiers are risking their lives to stop Iraq from making atom bombs which will go into the hands of terrorists and kill millions of Americans.

Raymond Solomon, New York City



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The Voice of Revolutionary
Industrial Unionism

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Oakland withdraws appeal in Bari case

The Oakland City Council has agreed to pay \$2 million to settle the case of IWW/Earth First activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney, rather than appeal a federal jury decision. The federal government has also reportedly agreed to pay another \$2 million.

The two were arrested in 1990 after surviving a car bombing during a campaign that sought to organize environmental activists and timber workers against clear cutting in northern California's ancient redwood forests. Authorities never attempted to discover who attempted to kill them.

In exchange, Cherney and the Bari estate will not seek to collect attorney's fees. "We knew that Oakland was facing hard times," Cherney said, "so we decided to be reasonable and forgo our motion for attorneys' fees if they were willing to be reasonable and offer us a respectable settlement."

Around Our Union

Members of the Staff Organizers Union of Pennsylvania (SOUP), an independent union which represents American Federation of Teachers organizers in Pennsylvania, have voted to affiliate with the IWW. Philadelphia Wobs also recently won union recognition from the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, after the national staff joined the union and sought voluntary recognition from WILPF's Board of Directors. At a recent retreat, the Philadelphia GMB decided to initiate an organizing campaign along one of the city's major restaurant and retail strips.

Oregon computer and telecommunications workers are exploring organizing possibilities. The IWW already has job shops in Eugene and Portland, and several members at a third shop. The Portland Industrial District Council is publishing a newsletter, the *Stumptown Wobbly*, and issued an IDC assessment stamp to help support their busy union hall.

The Melbourne IWW continues to press managers at the *Big Issue*, a magazine sold by the homeless, to improve unsafe conditions.

IWW members in Cincinnati, Ohio, have petitioned for a General Membership Branch charter. The branch is concentrating on organizing workers in the restaurant, natural foods and alternative retail sectors.

Ontario Organizing Committee

The Thunder Bay IWW group and the Ottawa-Outaouais GMB have formed the Ontario Organizing Committee to strengthen communication and foster a working relationship in the province. The OOC aims to include all branches and individual Wobs in Ontario. The OOC's first project will most likely be a pamphlet detailing workers' rights in Ontario.

The Ottawa-Outaouais GMB and the Carleton University Student Projectionists' Job Branch have begun collective bargaining negotiations with Carleton University. At this time, very little has been accomplished due to the fact that the university's bargaining team does not yet have a mandate to bargain from the school's board of governors.

Remembering James Brew

Arizona Wobs helped organize the Remember James Brew Conference in Bisbee, Arizona, July 11-13. FW Brew was killed by Phelps-Dodge deputies during the infamous Bisbee Deportation of 1917, when he resisted his kidnappers. Some 1,200 Wobblies and other strike supporters were rounded up and dumped in the desert hundreds of miles away.

In addition to workshops, showings of labor films, labor songs and a historical tour, participants held a memorial program at James Brew's grave in Evergreen Cemetery.

RetailWorker.com

The popular web site RetailWorker.com is being relaunched as retailworker.org, under the sponsorship of the IWW. The site will be administered by an IWW-affiliated web development collective, Revolt Ltd., located in Portland, Oregon, and by IU 660 members.

Somerville projectionists win after 10 weeks

After being locked out for over ten weeks, projectionists at the Somerville (Mass.) Theatre have won their struggle for union recognition. Management has agreed to recognize the union, IATSE, sign a contract, and pay full back wages to all locked-out employees.

The dispute was marked by mass picket lines, solidarity from delivery and repair workers, and sometimes-brutal attacks by Somerville police on picketers, including members of the IWW.

Somerville Theatre projectionists were paid minimum wage (\$6.75/hr) with no benefits, and worked in unhealthy conditions. Under the two-year contract, the starting wage for projectionists is fixed to the Somerville Living Wage Ordinance (currently \$9.55/hr); all full-time employees will be offered health benefits and vacation; and the Theatre is now

a 'union shop' for projectionists.

However, the victory came at a price. Throughout the dispute, management denounced the projectionists as anarchists – even trying to instigate an FBI investigation. During negotiations, management made it clear that they were unwilling to bring back the projectionists on political grounds. They ultimately agreed to step aside and be replaced by other union projectionists. The locked-out workers will be assigned to work in other Boston-area unionized theaters.

A victory statement issued by the "pissed-off projectionists" concludes:

"We hope that our struggle is an inspiration to other workers, particularly younger workers just beginning to understand their exploitation at the hands of their bosses. Our struggle was won primarily through direct ac-

tion and community pressure. Although we did indeed file for an election with the National Labor Relations Board, from the beginning of our campaign we had no faith in State mediation. We felt that the whole NLRB process played into the hands of the bosses and government bureaucrats, and effectively removed the class struggle from off the streets and out of the hands of the workers and confined it to the court rooms of the State.

"In the end it was not through the NLRB that we gained union recognition, but through a sustained campaign of public pressure and direct action. ...

"We think we were successful in proving that, as workers, our greatest strengths are in the refusal of our labor and our ability to organize effective resistance that goes beyond the workplace and into the community."

Teacher faces charges for challenging racist war recruiters

Sixty people demonstrated outside the Dorchester District Courthouse July 16, demanding that prosecutors withdraw charges against University of Massachusetts-Boston professor Tony Menelik Van Der Meer. The African Studies professor was arrested April 3 while defending a Wobbly student, Tony Naro, being harassed by military recruiters.

Naro was wearing an anti-recruitment t-shirt and handing out flyers on the 35th anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination just one year after his speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time To Break The Silence." The flyer drew connections between Vietnam and Iraq, noting that both were wars against the poor in the interests of imperialist powers, fought by the poor, and controlled by the rich.

When the recruiters saw FW Naro, they called campus police, who began interrogating him. In the meantime Naro was called a "Fucking Communist" by a recruiter. Naro verified that he was in fact a student and then walked away from police, continuing to hand out flyers. Police then told Naro he could not pass out flyers. As more police arrived, other

students arrived to hand out flyers and were subjected to more harassment. When Van Der Meer, a black male, passed by he saw his students in distress and came to help out.

At that point, one of the recruiters, dressed in full fatigues, walked up to FW Naro and told him, "You should be shot in the head like King!" Enraged, Naro yelled back that he was the one who should be shot. Professor Van Der Meer told the recruiter, "You can't say that! You can't say that to anyone!" The recruiter turned and threatened him as well, "You should be shot in the head!" The recruiter poked Van Der Meer, who shouted, "Don't touch me!"

Police then knocked Van Der Meer to the ground. He was charged with assault and battery on a police officer and resisting arrest. FW Naro was also assaulted by two of the officers but was not arrested, though he was partially cuffed for a moment and told he was under arrest for disorderly conduct.

This is a clear case of racist police officers protecting ruling class interests by attacking a peaceful student protester and his pro-

cessor while they were exercising their constitutional rights.

Military recruiters are not rare on college campuses and public schools, especially when the student body consists of working-class students who are susceptible to the lies of a "free" education which recruiters use to lure them into enlistment. The Pentagon spends over \$2.5 billion a year targeting low-income youth with commercials, video games, personal visits and slick brochures – taking advantage of an economy that increasingly squeezes out those without a college degree and the gutting of college financial aid.

It was the recruiters who made the threats, but the black professor who was arrested and charged for crimes he did not commit. FW Naro asks that all workers join the struggle to support Tony Van Der Meer and demand that all charges be dropped and the police and recruiters be brought to justice.

The next court date is Nov. 6; a legal defense fundraiser will be held at Roxbury Community College Sept. 11 (6 p.m.) For info on the campaign see: www.bostonmajustice.org

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$1,000, dues are \$6 a month. If your monthly income is between \$1,000 - \$2,000, dues are \$12 a month. If your monthly income is over \$2,000 a month, dues are \$18 a month.

- I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

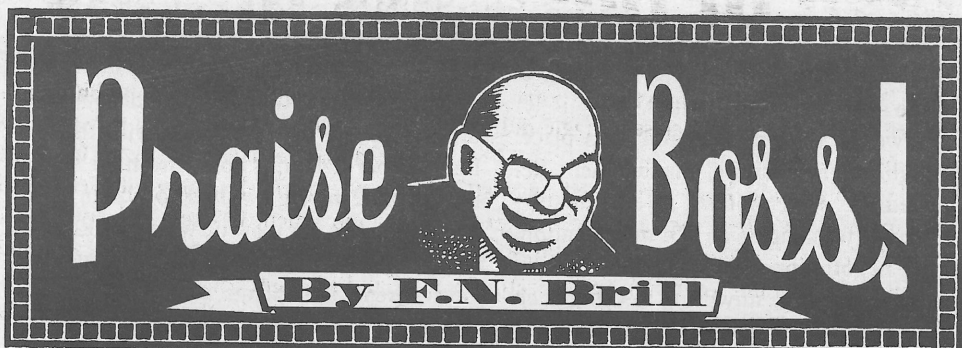
Occupation: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.





The Bush government must be the most short-sighted regime in decades! They start a war, but can't find the reasons. They pass a tax cut, but can't find the money. Hell, they even lost Dick Cheney. If they're this shortsighted, should we help them lose their capitalist system?

★ ★ ★

I had the pleasure of picking up Franklin Rosemont's new book, *Joe Hill: The IWW and the making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture*. What a book! While about Joe Hill, its more like Joe is the thread that runs through essays whose topics range from Joe Hill and the Mexican Revolution to "What Joe Hill taught Carl Sandburg." It's a wild ride, but one that links together much of US 20th century radicalism – political, economic and cultural – all woven around Joe Hill and the IWW. I highly recommend it. (Ed., it's available from the IWW Literature Dept. for \$17)

One quote I want to pass along to all of you is from poet Gary Snyder. Snyder, who was raised in Washington State and Oregon grew up with the IWW, identified with and was a member of the IWW. One of the great poets of America, this is what Snyder says today:

"I think the IWW is more relevant today than ever, because of globalization. All these anti-globalization demonstrations are great and I'm all for them, but there is another aspect to the question that's even more important: labor. Globalization will proceed and do its worst until workers start organizing globally, across national boundaries. Only a global labor movement can check global capitalism, and that's what the IWW is all about."

★ ★ ★

"The IWW is not a fixed institution, not a finish product... It is the still evolving embodiment of certain terrifically significant forces, which have not yet made their full concussion upon society."

— Floyd Dell, *Liberator* magazine

★ ★ ★

Portland IWWs were recently saddened to hear that one of our own was injured while on duty in Iraq. FW David (a National Guardsman) called from a military hospital in Germany to tell his story:

"We are having a hard time telling 'friendly' Iraqis from the hostile forces. So a translator came around to my unit and taught us to say 'Saddam is a pig!' in Arabic. The idea was when we were on patrol we could shout out 'Saddam is a pig!' and see if the locals were friendly by their reactions.

"The first day we were out we were walking down the main street of this town shouting 'Saddam is a pig!' in Arabic. All of a sudden a local started chanting 'Bush is a SOB' in English. A truck hit me and the local as we shook hands in the street."

★ ★ ★

Q: How many AFL/CLC/TUC officials does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Don't know 'cause no one ever sees them!

Q: How many vanguard cadres does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: 25; one to do it, and 24 to shout "We need new light!"

Q: How many anarchists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Five; one to do it and four to screw it up.

Q: How many council communists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: "We need to analyze the situation for 30 years, then we'll tell you."

★ ★ ★

"I would argue that the original success of the legend (that the term 'Wobbly' was started by a Chinese cook in British Columbia) within the IWW reflected its challenge to the 'Yellow Peril' hysteria of the time. I do not think it is purely accidental ... that a Chinese cook was selected for the honor – during the period in which the AFL was actively urging its members and supporters to stay away from Chinese restaurants. ... In the face of widespread anti-Chinese agitation, the IWW defended a thoroughgoing proletarian internationalism, denounced proponents of 'Chinese exclusion,' warmly welcomed Chinese into the union, and even held meetings in Chinese restaurants." From the essay: "The Importance of Chinese Cooking to the IWW," by F. Rosemont in *Joe Hill*.

★ ★ ★

First annual FN Brill Joke Contest: The best answer to "How many Wobblies does it take to screw in a light bulb?" will get a genuine Portland IWW Hall opening/Mayday 2002 Poster suitable for framing. Send entries the following addresses: FN Brill, c/o IWW, 616 E Burnside, Portland OR 97214 USA or e-mail fnbrill@yahoo.com

Guatemala's labour movement 'sexist'

BY PETER MOORE

Homophobia and sexism in the Guatemalan labour movement make it impossible to work in coalition, according to Guatemalan lesbian activist Claudia Acevedo. Acevedo is on a Canadian tour sponsored by EGALE Canada, Amnesty International and the Guatemalan Solidarity Committee of Ottawa.

"It's impossible to work with the unions," she said. "The unions are very sexist."

But unions are not the only groups to turn a blind eye to Guatemala's homosexuals. "Lesbians are invisible. There is no place for us – nor even a place for being against us," said Acevedo. "We don't fit into normal."

Guatemala's intolerant and "hetero-patriarchal" society brutally punishes lesbians, homosexuals and transsexuals, Acevedo said. Non-heterosexuals in Guatemala face harassment, beatings, rape, murder, social estrangement, and the removal of their children by family members.

To turn the tide, Lesbiradas, the only public lesbian group in Guatemala, has found allies among the feminist and human rights movements. "We wanted to have an attitude of resistance," said Acevedo.

To find out more, contact Lesbiradas in Spanish at lesbiradas@inteln.net.gt

Lusty Lady becomes first worker-owned peep show

When management decided to close the country's first unionized peep show in February, the dancers and other workers responded by buying the club and transforming it into a workers' cooperative. Lusty Lady dancers unionized in 1995, in an often-heated campaign documented in the film "Live Nude Girls Unite."

Now the dancers work the office between shifts, out to prove that they can do better without a boss. About 45 dancers have joined the co-op so far, as well as all 12 of the nondancing, mostly male support staff. The club will remain union.

Bush admin. assaulting workers' health

Two years after repealing regulations that would have protected workers from ergonomics injuries, the Bush administration has eliminated the requirement that employers keep records of them. The rule would have required employers to check a box on their workplace injury and illness log if an employee suffered an ergonomic injury. Ergonomics injuries include repetitive stress injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

The rule had been issued in the final days of the Clinton administration, and was immediately suspended when Bush took office.

New trial for Ontario anti-poverty activist John Clarke

BY MARK DICKSON

Prosecutors announced June 18 that they would not retry Ontario Coalition Against Poverty activists Stefan Pilipa and Gaetan Heroux, but will retry John Clarke in October. Their initial trial ended in a mistrial in May, when the jury could not reach a verdict.

The three were accused of "incitement to riot" under a rarely used law that carries a sentence of up to 5 years imprisonment. This trial involves events in June of 2001, when provincial police brutally attacked a peaceful demonstration in Toronto.

Looting workers' pensions

Republican congressmen called police to eject Democratic representatives from a Capitol hearing room July 18 when they refused to participate in a committee vote on a "pension reform" bill introduced the night before.

The pension bill, backed by mutual fund

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration now says the record-keeping would be too burdensome for business.

Every year, roughly a million people in the United States suffer from workplace-related musculoskeletal disorders (mostly ergonomics injuries) so severe they must take time off from work, according to Peg Seminario, director of occupational safety and health for the AFL-CIO. The injuries are so frequent and serious, she says, that employers who take steps to avert them generally see rapid payback in worker's compensation savings.

companies, would increase the amount employees could contribute to 401(k)-type retirement accounts, while allowing companies to reduce payments to cover retiree benefits – ultimately leaving these plans underfunded and likely to collapse.

Already, the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. – which bails out bankrupt pension plans – is running out of money, and estimates that it could face \$30 billion in claims.

Free speech in malls?

Connecticut's supreme court has agreed to decide whether shopping malls are public spaces that must allow free speech. United Food & Commercial Workers Local 919 has sued Crystal Mall, challenging its refusal to allow union members to distribute literature there. The union says that the mall is the modern equivalent of the town green, and receives substantial public resources. As a result, they say, it should be covered by free speech guarantees. The case will be heard this fall.

International labor action hits Coke death squads

An international day of action July 22 kicked off a union boycott campaign against Coca-Cola in solidarity with Colombian unionists who face death squads in the company's bottling plants. Several Australian unions removed Coca-Cola vending machines from their premises and encouraged employers to do the same.

Coca-Cola's main Latin-American bottler, Panamco, is being sued in the United States by the Colombian food and beverage union Sinaltrainal for allegedly financing right-wing paramilitaries which murdered and intimidated union leaders. The union is appealing a court order dismissing Coca-Cola from the suit, which continues against its bottler.

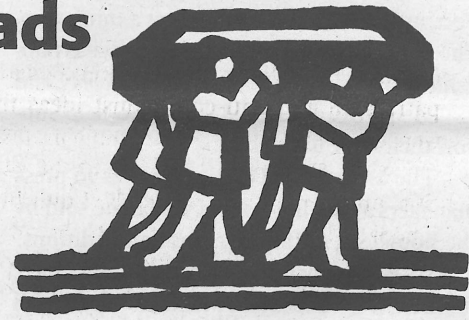
Coca-Cola claims it is an innocent bystander, caught in the crossfire of civil war. More than 1,500 trade unionists have been killed in Columbia in the past decade, including eight at Coca-Cola plants since 1996. The union continues to receive death threats, and one of its members, Adolfo Munera, was killed last August, a week after a court ordered the company to allow him to return to work.

The campaign is being opposed by several unions. The International Union of Foodworkers, based in Switzerland, has issued a statement condemning the boycott while conceding that the company has a shaky human rights record.

In the Australian state of Victoria, unions watered down boycott plans after complaints from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, which receives 10 cents for every can of Coke product sold at machines on construction sites. Under the deal, Coke has exclusive access to the sites. The union says it uses the proceeds for health and safety equipment.

Australia's Liquor, Hospitality & Miscellaneous Workers Union, which represents Coca-Cola factory workers, also opposed the boycott, though it said it would meet with the company to press human rights concerns.

The boycott was called by Colombian food and drinks workers union SINALTRAINAL and is supported by the country's main union federation, the CUT, as well as by the World Social Forum. The union is de-



RINI TEMPLETON

manding an end to assassinations, and that Coca-Cola print a memorial of the murdered workers on its labels and pay reparations to the victims' families.

Meanwhile, PANAMCO Colombia S.A. and Embotelladora de Santander S.A (bottlers of Coca-Cola in Colombia) are pressing criminal libel charges against the union and several of its officials in the Colombian courts.

A union statement issued August 6 notes: "Coca-Cola is insisting ... that several of the victims of the human rights violations which they themselves benefited from should be criminalized. The Fiscalía is prosecuting those of us who at the risk of our own lives are denouncing these grave crimes, while the real responsibility lies with the impunity in which hundreds of crimes against workers can be found."

92 unionists assassinated

Death squad attacks on Colombian unionists continue, most recently on July 3 with the assassination of Rafael Angel Mesa Aguilar, treasurer of the Segovia Antioquia branch of the public sector workers' union SINTRAOFAN, and the attempted assassination of Manuel Hoyos Montiel, president of the Atlántico general workers union UTRAL.

Despite government claims that it is cracking down on the death squads, 92 unionists have been assassinated since the Uribe administration took office August 7, 2002.

In June an executive board member of the university workers' union and three officers at a union representing workers at a Michelin subsidiary received death threats, an officer of the public sector union Sintraemsdes was assassinated, and the president of the agricultural workers' union SINPEAGRICUN was arrested for union activity.

Alberta's Bill 27 creates clash of business unions

BY EUGENE PLAWIUK

Instead of refusing to accept Bill 27 which outlaws the right of all health care workers in Alberta to strike, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees are in a race to gather up each other's workers.

Due to charges of raiding CUPE, AUPE was expelled from the National Union of Provincial Government Employees two years ago. Isolation from the house of labour was the leadership and management plan. No sooner had they dropped out of the house of labour than AUPE management forced its paid staff, (members of USWA) to strike. This was a backass way of firing reps that they otherwise would have been taken to arbitration over.

The provincial government waded in with its hand-picked labour board and created Bill 27, eliminating the right to strike for all health care workers and forcing workers to choose one union to represent them in each health region. Bill 27 also eliminated democratically elected health boards, whose members were elected only two years ago in province-wide municipal elections.

This government has thrown the fox in with the chickens and instead of putting aside their differences, CUPE and AUPE accepted the terms of Bill 27 and are now campaigning to win over each other's members.

What a waste of time – instead of mobilizing their members to defend their right to strike by calling a general strike, they are campaigning for dues payers. So much for the so-

called social unionism of CUPE. When push comes to shove they are just another business union, their business being to bargain the variable capital of labour. As the bosses bring their money to the table, the business unions bring the workers' power to the table, and for social peace accept a few wage increases and benefits for these workers. In the end selling them out to "management rights" rather than defending "workers rights".

The AFL and CUPE along with other health care unions, UNA (nurses), HSAA (technologists), have launched a legal challenge to Bill 27 under NAFTA. AUPE has launched a complaint with the UN and the ILO. The Tory dictatorship in Alberta no doubt quivers in anticipation of the slap on the wrist these actions will bring.

Ironically it is AUPE, whose president has close relations with the right wing government and its media cheerleaders, that has challenged the government with illegal health care strikes. A province-wide strike called by AUPE led to spontaneous solidarity walkouts by some CUPE locals, while the CUPE leadership played footsie with the health boards, reluctant to mobilize their members to engage in an illegal strike.

Two years later AUPE went out on an illegal strike again and were pummeled by the government with massive fines. Followed by a labour board ruling taking away the dues check of for some members of the union, in effect forcing them to actually go out and talk to members and collect dues face to face, like

the IWW does.

Bill 27 is the government's response to these strikes, and to the class struggle in the public sector.

Labour could have mobilized against Klein in 1995 when the laundry workers struck, forcing a citywide shut down of hospitals in Calgary and confronting privatization of their jobs. Instead an unholy alliance of CUPE and AUPE leadership met with the health board, separate from the workers involved in the strike, and settled the strike before it spread across the province (only hours away), creating a general strike.

The unions settled to sell out the workers, delaying their contracting out by two years. K-Bro, a company with ties to the government, was given the laundry contract. Today K-Bro is international, promoting hospital laundry contracting out in Ontario, British Columbia and in the U.S.

The despair of defeating the Klein government agenda in Alberta leaves the labour movement powerless. With the building trades bought off with long-term oil sands projects, the labour movement, or at least its leadership, cannot mobilize their members in solidarity with strikes – let alone build resistance. Their cynicism and disconnect from the rank and file exposes the business unions as powerless to battle the class war, since they restrict themselves to bargaining for crumbs of the Alberta Advantage.

While the government attacks the public sector on all fronts, unions limit their response

to the vocal outrage of paid staff.

Bill 27 sets the stage for smashing other public sector unions and the private sector. Class war has been declared by the bosses and their government, knowing full well that the labour movement is weak and divided, and its leadership does not believe it can build a rank-and-file fight back movement.

In Alberta this is "business" as usual.

Labor defends pie-thrower

The Alberta Federation of Labor has set up a defense fund to aid three students arrested for pieing premier Ralph Klein in early July. AFL President Les Steel said the "pie that was heard across the country" was provoked by government policies.

"We've got a government that forced power deregulation on a public that didn't want it. We have a government that claims it can't afford to maintain our education system even though we've recorded years of multi-billion-dollar surpluses. And ... colleges and universities are being priced out of the reach of more and more of our young people.

"To top things off, when people raise concerns about these things, they're either met with smug indifference or dismissed as 'left-wing nuts.'"

The AFL says criminal charges should not have been brought, but that it wants to make sure that the pie-throwers do not fall victim to a political show trial. Those interested can send contributions to the AFL in Edmonton c/o the "Justice for Pies" defense fund.



BY GARY COX

I grew up in a white working class community with all the racial fears, blind jingoist patriotism and anti-communist ideas that were drilled into most of our young minds in the Midwest in the 1940s. But in the early '50s, unlike most of my friends, I quit high school and joined the Army; partly because I disliked the large, regimented high school I had entered, but also because I craved adventure and the Korean War had just begun.

Inculcated with an anti-communist upbringing and World War II movies, what greater adventure could befall me at 17 years of age? As I look back on it, I realize that my time in Korea was the beginning of a new and uncomfortable reeducation process.

The contradictions between my experiences in Korea and my former education were glaring. I became a machine-gunner in a recently desegregated regiment. Living and fighting for your life with black, brown, yellow and red people for a year can give one a new perspective about racial differences. Those I could depend on and those I couldn't had nothing to do with racial background.

One day I watched a pool of blood grow in front of me fed by the blood of all our colors and I noticed it never changed hue as new blood from a new race was added. I began to think how similar mixed pools of blood had fertilized the soil in every war this country has fought, and how seldom history books mentioned that fact.

I belonged to one of the first integrated regiments in U.S. history but this was not the first war in which we had bled for the same cause. In combat, few actually wind up fighting for ideals or patriotism. I didn't. You become close friends with those around you in dangerous situations and you fight for them. Otherwise, you might run. Bonds become strong, not only because you depend on one another for survival, but because long nights are spent talking about home, girlfriends, family, futures, dreams; for me, the color lines melted into the freezing night air during that year in Korea.

This was a radical transformation for me. It began a process of questioning all the information I had accepted as "obvious" from persons I admired and trusted. They had not

lied to me, they simply did not have this type of experience on which to base their conclusions, and, even if they had, many people just don't question their previous conclusions. Racism did not die for me in Korea, but recognizing the lies that supported it, and the injustice of it, I began to deeply resent the hypocrisy between the rhetoric of America and our behavior. It's a bit frightening to begin forming your opinions based on your own experiences and thought, isn't it?

The real wake-up call came when I returned home and witnessed how people of color were treated on Main Street. Why hadn't I noticed this before? I saw for the first time, through new eyes, that "freedom and justice for all" was part of a ritual we performed every morning in grade school when we pledged allegiance to the flag, but few adults wanted the reality. Fewer still saw the contradiction.

I became a pariah in my old neighborhood when I became deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement. They could not understand what had happened to me. Send your sons and daughters to war, America. They will come home strangers to you – some dead, some crippled physically, some crippled emotionally, and some questioning your values, but none who have witnessed combat will come home the same person you sent away.

I began reading books voraciously. Now I wanted more education. Most of the books I read were not offered in the schools I attended. I had seen in Korea that we had not risked our lives for "freedom and democracy." South Korea's President Rhee was a ruthless dictator who ordered his detractors shot. I came to the conclusion that all wars we had fought before and since have been the same. We defend dictators who give our corporations free reign in their countries and wage war against dictators who will not. Another beautiful myth dissolved.

I began a search for the "democracy" we pride ourselves on. It wasn't tolerated at any

place I'd ever worked. It certainly wasn't tolerated in the U.S. Army. It wasn't tolerated in the schools. It was fast disappearing in my trade union. If we love democracy so much, where the hell is it practiced? If the elections we hold every four years, in which we get to vote for one of two candidates carefully culled by the rich and powerful to make sure both candidates are friendly to our corporations, is democracy, then democracy is a farce.

Recently, I had a "well-educated" friend tell me, "There is a problem with democracy. I work hard to study the candidates before I vote. Then some uneducated slob who doesn't know the issues either cancels my vote or doesn't vote at all." What can I say? Many of the people I worked with in the oil fields don't vote because they feel the whole election process is controlled by the wealthy and no matter who gets elected, nothing changes. Who is nearer to the truth?

It takes engineers, architects and ironworkers to complete a bridge. We need universities. The problem is that college graduates often don't realize there are many facts ignored in their curriculum that workers often learn by experience. There are many ways to receive an education outside of Harvard. We need to share and value all knowledge, whatever the source. The outrageously expensive dog and pony shows every four years, often called elections, are not democracy. Democracy means that you have a voice in every event that affects your life 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for the rest of your life.

I came to the conclusion that if America is supposed to represent democracy, freedom, and justice for all, then America is an illusion. The United States of America that I believed in does not exist and never has existed. "America" is beautiful ideals written by hopeful men in the 18th century, but we have never taken those ideals very seriously.

Erich Fromm, the German psychologist, wrote *The Sane Society* – one of the books I had never read in school. He said that a na-

tion can become insane, that the majority of a nation can choose to live with illusion rather than deal with reality and when this was the case, the sane were locked up as misfits. He was talking about Germany during its experiment with fascism, of course, or was he? Capitalism was so bound up with the ideals of freedom, democracy, and human rights by the spin doctors of "education" in my young mind that I hesitated to criticize capitalism. It took the winds of the transformation that began in Korea, and shop floor experience combined with the reading I was doing to blow away the illusion that we actually enjoy any of those high ideals unless they are doled out by the corporations to "keep the peace," to retain control and maintain the illusions. Shop floor experience taught me that capitalist corporations and democracy cannot peacefully exist in the same space. Corporations don't like democracy any more than they like competition or free markets. Capitalists will go to war to prevent any of the three from actually occurring. And if capitalism was anti-democratic, was socialism an alternative?

I began attending meetings of socialists, communists, preservationists... you name it. When leftists find out you are becoming anti-capitalist, they will try to recruit you into their personal quick-fix organizations. They all have the answer. I became convinced that redistributing the wealth would only give rise to a permanent redistribution bureaucracy. We need to redistribute power. If people control their own destinies through democratic processes, they will take care of their own economic future. None of the political parties that I checked out showed any real faith in the possibility that people could run their own lives. Workers would need direction by guess who. "Oh, maybe when the time is right self-direction will be a good idea." In other words, when we all agree with their particular point of view. Hell, Rockefeller would agree to that philosophy. However, for the capitalist camp, the fear isn't that people couldn't run their own lives, but the fear that they might do just that if that thought became popular.

The one thing that carried over from my early education is a deep abiding faith in democracy; not because it is perfect, but because I believe that when people make their own decisions in life they begin to become fully human – they begin to flower as a civilized mankind. When people are denied the oppor-

continued on page 6



A unionism that confronts capital

Following is the text of the opening remarks delivered by Staughton Lynd:

Brothers and sisters, comrades. Forgive me, I do not speak Spanish. I am a barbarian: I speak only one language. Therefore I shall have to speak in English.

This is the fifth in a series of gatherings on alternative unionism, or as we sometimes say, "solidarity unionism." The first three were in Youngstown. The fourth sought to honor the coming together of students and workers in Seattle, Quebec City and Genoa, and was held at Kent State University. I grew up in New York City and I am very pleased that the fifth gathering is being held here.

What do we mean by solidarity unionism? What is the core idea? In the history of the United States, there have been two kinds of labor unions.

First, there are traditional trade unions. Historically, they were often craft unions, because the skill of a carpenter or a roller in a steel mill gave those workers leverage with the employer. But – very important – they don't have to be craft unions. Today most traditional trade unions are industrial unions. The defining characteristic of traditional unions is that they seek to defend the short-term material interests of a particular group of workers, and to hell with everybody else. They don't try to change the capitalist system. They are part of it. They don't seek a more democratic society. National trade unions of the traditional sort are among the least democratic institutions in this society.

The other kind of unions, alternative unions, differ in two ways.

First, we seek what in the 1960s we called "participatory democracy." It's not enough every so often to vote for other people to make decisions in your name. People should participate in the decisions that affect their daily lives. As nearly as we can, we practice the idea that "we are all leaders."

Second, we seek an economy and society based on cooperation, not profit. Alternative unions recognize that only basic changes in the structure of this society would make it possible for the union fully to achieve its goals.

I see three such alternative unions in United States history.

The Knights of Labor flourished from about 1870 to about 1885. The Knights left us the vision of a society made up of producer cooperatives and the words, "An injury to one is an injury to all" (pointing to these words on his t-shirt). There is a whole Old Testament and New Testament in those words.

Then came the IWW, founded in 1905 and still existing. The IWW is represented at this conference by its general secretary, Alexis Buss, and a number of individual members. Finally the Farm Workers, in their early years under Cesar Chavez, are important to us this weekend for two things. 1. The boycott. Farm workers are excluded from the National Labor Relations Act and are free to call for boycotts. 2. The blend of ethnic and labor traditions, as in the practice of making big decisions on Mexican Independence Day, September 16.

For workers who come to the United

States from another country, it can be very confusing to deal with traditional trade unions in this country.

You remember the "Justice for Janitors" campaign of the Service Employees International Union in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. Many of the janitors involved came from Guatemala and El Salvador. In those countries you could get killed for joining a union, as in Colombia today.

So the janitors joined the SEIU and once they had joined, they had the idea: we'd like to have a voice in running this local. Together with Anglo hospital nurses they fielded a slate of candidates which captured every office on the local union executive board, except for president, which they did not contest.

This was in the early summer of 1995. In September 1995, in one of his last acts as SEIU president before becoming AFL-CIO president, John Sweeney put the Justice for Janitors local into trusteeship and removed all its elected officers.

To my mind what we have to understand is that, more and more, traditional labor unions – top-down, bureaucratic, business unions – no longer do the minimum things that any kind of union must do to survive.

Consider the textile workers union in New York City. I understand that more than half the employers under contract with UNITE actually pay their workers less than the wages called for in the collective bargaining agreement and less than the minimum wage required by law. For this, we don't need a union. Such a union is an obstacle to workers seeking the minimum wage. The union permits the employer to say, "Well, the union agreed to it."

It's the same way with the steelworkers union in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The companies are shutting down and moving to low-wage markets, just like textile manufacturers in New York City. The union has no answer. So it joins with the bosses in lobbying to keep foreign steel out of the country. The union says that steelworkers in other countries have an unfair advantage and so can sell government-subsidized steel in the United States.

What is meant by an "unfair advantage" is that these other countries are civilized. Instead of employers paying for the health care and pensions of certain groups of workers under the collective bargaining agreement, the state in those foreign countries pays for everybody's health care.

So is there an alternative? Are we on our way to becoming a non-union society? What is to be done? No one in this room has magic answers.

Here are some clues, some hypotheses to be tested.

1. Most businesses are local and regional, not national or international. If you work for U.S. Steel or General Motors you need to have a way to hook up with other workers employed by the same company. I remember a man who started a local union at a U.S. Steel mill in Chicago in the 1930s telling me, in his Scottish accent, "Staughton, the only power we had was over the bars of soap in the wash room." But most businesses aren't like that. When you work for a local or re-

"Traditional labor unions – top-down, bureaucratic, business unions – no longer do the minimum things that any kind of union must do to survive."

Organizer, labor lawyer and historian Staughton Lynd, speaking at the opening session of the conference on Alternative Forms of Worker Organizing June 28.

gional employer there is no reason to belong to a national or so-called "international" union.

2. As the economy moves in the direction of service industries rather than manufacturing, employers become more vulnerable to consumer boycotts. In situations where the union itself would violate the law by calling for a boycott, community groups can do it.

3. Boycotts and other forms of community support can most easily be organized when people who work together also live together in homogeneous neighborhoods near the workplace.

This is how it used to be in Polish or Italian neighborhoods near to steel mills. Everybody walked up the hill to the same neighborhood after work, and kids were told to be quiet because the man next door might be working a different shift and need his sleep. As I understand it, this is how it is today in many neighborhoods in Los Angeles and New York City where folks from Mexico, or the Dominican Republic, or West Africa, or Pakistan, live near each other and near the places where they work together.

4. Even in manufacturing, just-in-time inventory practices make very large employers vulnerable to disruption by small groups of workers. A few hundred workers who make brakes in southwest Ohio were able to shut down the whole of General Motors when they went on strike a couple of years ago.

5. And most of all, as capitalism and privatization of public services are imposed on the whole world, more and more poor and working people rise up against it.

A nontraditional union like the IWW is not going to solve anyone's problems for them. It can offer support and encouragement. Fundamentally answers need to be found locally, and local groups – whether local unions, rank-and-file caucuses, parallel central labor unions or workers' centers – need to reach out to each other, horizontally (extending arms to either side of himself), for solidarity and support.

That is solidarity unionism.

It has one more element, which we shall be exploring tomorrow morning with JoAnn Wypijewski.

Traditional unions line up behind their respective national governments. This was true of European unions in World War I. It has been true of unions in the United States, in World War II and every subsequent war. Trade unions may talk a good game before the fighting starts, but after the first shot is fired, they crumble. War means more jobs and higher wages. Being against war means risking pressure from society around you to a degree that traditional unions fear.

We have a special responsibility in this regard.

An injury to one – in Iraq, in Palestine, in the Congo, in Ecuador, in Colombia – is an injury to all. And these days a good many of the injuries are inflicted by what, for want of a better term, I will call "our government": the government of the United States.

In 1968 French students said: Be realistic, demand the impossible. A generation later, students and workers affirmed: Another world is possible. Let us demand it.

A Wobbly's Dream from page 5

tunity to be involved in the decisions that affect them they begin to shrivel, no matter how well off financially they may be.

Thirty-five years ago, a good friend introduced me to the IWW. I've carried a red card ever since I read the literature and fascinating history. Was it perfect? Of course not. It was made up of workers with a dream of liberation from all bosses, capitalist or socialist, a dream of economic democracy, a dream to end capitalist created wars by making all workers around this precious globe brothers and sisters united as equal partners in a self-directed economy with the fruits of our labor shared by all.

Is this a realistic dream? I don't know, but what a beautiful dream. I have paid my dues for 35 years because I want to keep that dream alive. Nothing else I've explored makes as much sense. The IWW carries the foundations of all that I believe in – democracy, liberty and justice for all, the end of the exploitation of humans and the environment for the profit of the few – into a future where some freedom loving malcontents may pick up this 100-year-old idea and try once again to create a self-directed society. Those of us who believe in this dream hang on to our little red cards with a tight fist to keep this flickering flame burning because we feel the importance of such dreams.

Do we have all the answers? The importance of democracy is not only the civilizing effect it has on us, but also the humbling acceptance of the fact that we don't have all the answers – none of us. Democracy operates like the old fable of the three blind men and the elephant. Each has part of the answer from his own experience with the elephant but none understands the whole. Only if each respectfully listens to the others' experiences will they increase their own knowledge and have a chance to solve the question of "What is the problem and how do we deal with it?"

The IWW has been criticized for not having clear blueprints for your future. I submit that the future must be your joint decision. What do you want your future to be? As one of the IWW's founding members, Eugene V. Debs, said: "If you are waiting for a messiah to lead you out of the wilderness, I'm afraid you'll have to wait forever. If I could lead you out, some other damn fool would lead you right back in."

Many of us join the IWW with our politics semi-hardened and think that the "One Big Union" could be built around one narrow political philosophy or another. This is another illusion that must also melt away. The founders of the IWW understood that to have One Big Union of all workers, that union would have to include people from very diverse backgrounds. That is why democracy was such an important foundation for the founders of the IWW and they tried to make politics a secondary issue to be debated amongst friends. Officers of political parties were actually barred from membership in the union.

Democracy is the most revolutionary demand that workers can make. You won't find this demand in the program of any group that wants to control your lives. Democracy, at the same time, makes the biggest demands on workers themselves.

To have a democracy requires us to have the humility to understand that our own knowledge is imperfect at best, to have the courage to trust in the ability of others to make good decisions if given all the facts available, and to have the patience to allow the civilized society to evolve from that trust. Joint decisions will only rarely reflect what we as individuals believe to be a "perfect" solution but we must never lose faith in the healing ability of democracy, or in the joy of releasing the creative juices of working people. More important than perfect decisions is the redistribution of power to the grass roots of a very diverse society. For redistribution of power to work, we must shed our need to control. Who said becoming a Wobbly was easy? Joining is easy. Becoming a Wobbly is not. The ego suffers many blows in the process.

Can we rise to the dream of 1905? Is that a possibility? I don't know, but here's a toast to the dream.

Alternative forms of worker organizing

continued from page 1

models of organizing, Desai remarked, they were also committed to developing a vision of an alternative society and ridding ourselves of the present capitalist system based on greed and exploitation.

Jerry Dominguez of the Mexican-American Workers Association (AMAT) drew on his family's experience living lives constantly disrupted by the border. Because Mexican-American workers have been consistently ignored and screwed over by mainstream unions, AMAT stresses independent organizing and direct action tactics.

The Restaurant Opportunities Center was organized in the aftermath of 9/11 to respond to the crisis facing many restaurant workers in the area. Saru Jayaraman explained how the ROC is helping workers who lost their jobs in the World Trade Center to launch an upscale cooperative restaurant (which opened shortly after the conference), has been sponsoring studies of employment conditions in the industry, and has helped workers at several area restaurants resolve grievances through picketing and other forms of direct

charge of their own lives and struggles, and suggested that a revived labor movement must be built through such a process.

Following a tasty dinner served up by members of the New York City General Membership Branch, Mike Stout of Pittsburgh performed a set of music for a small but appreciative group.

On Sunday, the conference opened with a session on internationalism, opening with a talk by JoAnn Wypijewski on the need to confront the interaction of capitalism, imperialism and racism. We are "going into a permanent war economy," she said, in which there is "No butter, just guns." The presentation was followed by a discussion on labor efforts against the recent war, in which some participants were quite critical of the "peace is patriotic" crowd for failing to challenge American jingoism or to develop a broader sense of international working-class solidarity. Bhairavi Desai of the Taxi Workers Alliance discussed a middle-of-the-night meeting of drivers to discuss the war, and others spoke about raising the issue in their workplaces. Everyone agreed that much work still

demands of campus-based and network organizing. Cynthia Norman discussed the Coalition of University Employees, an independent union at the University of California formed after clerical workers became fed up with a bureaucratic AFSCME local that had little or no presence on the job. Relying on volunteer organizers and alliances with other campus unions, CUE has rebuilt a union presence from the ground up while fighting the administration's efforts to solve the U.C. budget crisis on workers' backs.

Kae Kalwaic opened her presentation on the Swarthmore College Living Wage & Democracy Campaign with a short video, before discussing how they have built a coalition of staff and student activists to force administrators to address standard wages. She noted that the campaign is about wages, but also about power. Participants in the workshop spoke to the growth of corporate models and subcontracting at universities, with devastating effects for many workers, and the need to build coalitions prepared to challenge the new academic managerialism.

Organizing immigrants

Sunday afternoon saw a final round of workshops on day labor organizing, with representatives from the Workplace Project and the Latin American Workers Project; organizing in high-turnover industries, with Domestic Workers United, the IWW, and Restaurant Opportunities Center; and community organizing for workplace justice (in Spanish), by Make the Road by Walking.

The day labor projects are part of a growing national network of centers that focus on meeting workers' immediate needs within a shape-up system by setting up worker-controlled hiring halls that offer a safe place to seek jobs, information on workers' rights, and ensure that workers are paid for the work they do. Both speakers stressed the importance of worker control. "I wouldn't lift a single finger to set up a shape-up center if the workers were not participating," one noted.

In the session on organizing in high-turnover industries, Saru Jayaraman discussed the ROC's efforts to provide small groups of workers with a regional network of resources they can draw upon to solve workplace concerns.

IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Buss discussed the IWW's Industrial Union Branch model, which provides more transient job branches with a stable base of support from workers with experience in the industry. The IUB can identify industry-wide concerns and lend support to campaigns — particularly important in sectors where few workers stick around long enough to see a traditional union drive through from organizing campaign to first contract.

And Jacqueline Maxwell of Domestic Workers United spoke of their efforts to help

isolated workers develop and maintain a common baseline of standards and to resolve difficulties that may arise. While their members are often in long-term situations, they live in the employer's home and so can be difficult to contact.

And in the conference's only entirely Spanish-language session, Make the Road by Walking discussed their work as an immigrant community center based in Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood. They operate several programs for low-wage immigrant workers, youth, and gays and lesbians in the community, as well as projects challenging environmental racism and problems in the schools. Its Workers In Action project seeks to combine collective action and legal assistance to help workers enforce their minimum wage and overtime pay rights.

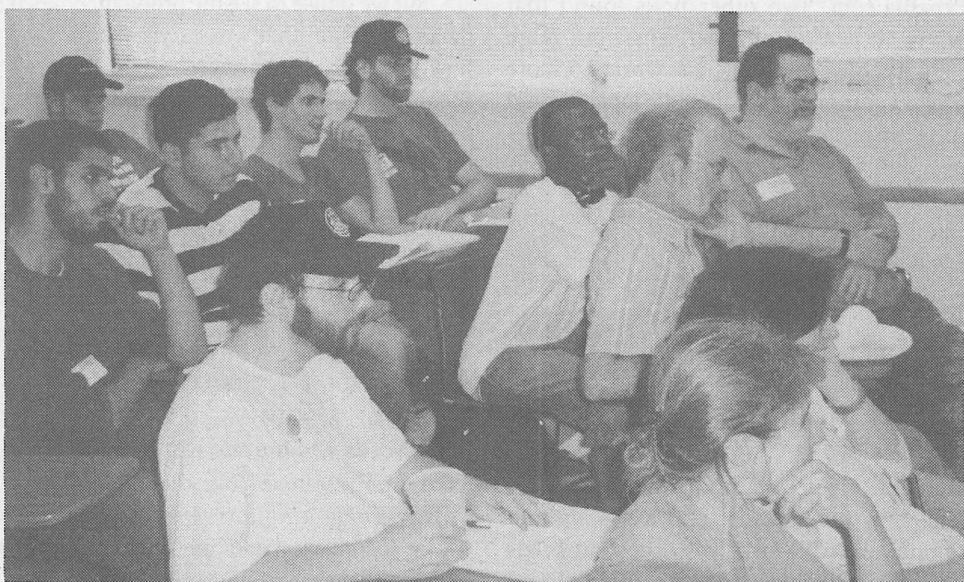
While the conference fell somewhat short of expectations for back-and-forth dialogue on different organizing ideas, and might have been better scheduled as a one-day event, it did bring together people from many different organizations and approaches and open an important discussion that could provide a solid basis for building future conferences around this vital subject.

The hard work of Make the Road by Walking and Fellow Worker Bert Picard made English-Spanish translation possible throughout the conference. One workshop was held in Spanish, with English translation.

Participants included activists from the Association for Union Democracy, Black Telephone Workers for Justice, Coalition of University Employees, COCAL, CUNY's Center for Worker Education, DAMAYAN, Danzine, DeBug, Direct Action Network of Chicago, Domestic Workers United, HERE Local 100, several IWW branches, Latin American Workers Project, Make the Road by Walking, Mexican American Workers Association (AMAT), Morgan (Post Office) for Mumia, the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists, Restaurant Opportunities Center, SEIU local 1199, Taxi Workers Alliance, Swarthmore College Living Wage & Democracy Campaign, a UNITE local, "Building Bridges" (WBAI radio's labor program), the Workplace Project, the Workers Solidarity Alliance, Youngstown Workers Solidarity Club, students and rank-and-file workers from the bike messenger, computer, government, health care, janitorial, and retail industries.



Saru Jayaraman (Restaurant Opportunities Center), Alexis Buss (Industrial Workers of the World), and Bhairavi Desai (Taxi Workers Alliance), speaking as part of the plenary on alternative organizing models.



action. They have won agreements at some restaurants for ROC representation in disciplinary and grievance proceedings, as well as winning back pay and other issues.

Ron Washington spoke for Black Telephone Workers for Justice, a rank-and-file caucus in the IBEW's Verizon unit in New Jersey which is trying to increase workers' involvement in the union and in the community. One of their major fights has been to win Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a holiday, a fight they have pursued through the simple expedient of organizing workers to walk off the job. He described the "trade union bureaucracy [as] a fifth column in the working-class movement," and noted the need to tie workers' struggles to broader politics. "They opened a closet and pulled out \$200 billion to prosecute a war. We should never again let them tell us there's no money for schools."

Three members of the Youngstown Workers Solidarity Club — Tony Budak, Lessley Harmon, and Ed Wells — discussed their efforts to organize a parallel central labor council, in which rank-and-file workers come together to assist each other's struggles, and spoke about some specific community and labor campaigns they had been involved with.

And IWW General Secretary-Treasurer Alexis Buss noted that the mainstream labor movement has become invisible to most workers, and pursues a strategy that guarantees that it will have no presence in most workplaces. The IWW has been experimenting with organizing strategies that enable small groups of workers to struggle together to improve their conditions, and to develop sector-wide organizing campaigns that can overcome the fragmentation inherent in many high-turnover small workplaces.

The presentations were followed by an open discussion in which some activists shared their own experiences, while others insisted that workers needed to organize a political party rather than relying on workplace struggles. Several noted the possibilities raised by mobilizing rank-and-file workers to take

needs to be done to better connect workplace organizing with international issues.

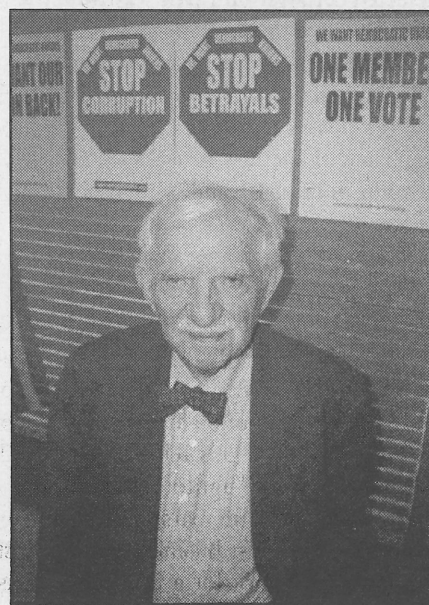
Workplace Contractualism

The conference then broke into workshops. A morning session featured discussions on job zines, exploring the connections between worker self-publishing and self-organizing with Theresa Dulce from *Danzine* (a publication by and for sex workers) and Kapila of the Silicon Valley-based *Debug* (a bilingual magazine published by young workers in the low-paid jobs in the high-tech sector); workplace contractualism, with presentations by Staughton Lynd and the Taxi Workers Alliance; and organizing campus workers.

In the session on workplace contractualism, Staughton Lynd offered a critique of contracts that give up workers' right to strike and otherwise bind them in a legalistic framework, but retain management prerogative clauses that allow factories to be shut down. Bhairavi Desai talked about the near impossibility of winning contracts in the "independent contractor" situation Taxi Workers face.

Participants discussed the difficulties of organizing models that revolve around contract campaigns, which tend to mobilize workers only at renegotiation time. The usefulness of written agreements with bosses couldn't be ignored, and many participants shared how they were able to make gains and mobilize workers using contract language as a shield. But as new organizing models develop, changing contracts' orientation from an agreement between the union and employer to a tool rank-and-file unionists and workers can use to improve their conditions will be significant.

The Boston Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor has been organizing part-time and temporary faculty in the dozens of colleges in the greater Boston area for three years, attempting to link campus-based working groups with a network of scattered activists to lend support and inspiration to each other. While there have been some important successes, there is a constant tension between the



AFL: Reformer a security risk

The AFL-CIO asked Chicago's luxurious Drake Hotel, site of its recent Executive Council meeting, to bar veteran labor writer Harry Kelber from the building as a "security risk." Kelber had covered AFL meetings for more than 25 years without incident. A former union staffer, Kelber now writes on the problems facing unions on his website, laboreducator.org, and in publications such as his recent pamphlet, "Ten Ways to Reform an Undemocratic AFL-CIO":

"In their view unions must function like military organizations... Members must speak with one voice, they say, to show they are united behind their elected leaders. Critics, when they are not ignored, are denounced as disrupters accused of giving aid and comfort to the enemy."

Take Back Your Time day

As the U.S. work week grows ever longer, plans are proceeding for Take Back Your Time Day (www.timeday.org) on Oct. 24. Organizers have just released a handbook for the event, which contains chapters exploring nearly every facet of overwork, from the impact on family and community life to the damage to the environment and our health.

Other chapters document the ever-lengthening work week, and contrast the situation to the rest of the world, where workers have been fighting for and winning longer vacations and shorter working hours.

The authors do cling to some dangerous illusions – suggesting that employers would benefit from shorter hours (and so could be persuaded to support them), and that politicians might be persuaded to implement them because it would benefit society as a whole – but offer abundant documentation of the urgent need to reduce work time, and some practical tips on how to organize shorter work time events in your community and workplace. There is also artwork and other material to help produce local campaign material.

Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America (John de Graaf, editor, \$14.95, available from the IWW Literature Dept.). The IWW has endorsed Take Back Your Time day, and urges local branches and groups to organize shorter hours events in their workplaces and communities.

Labor Dept. lock out

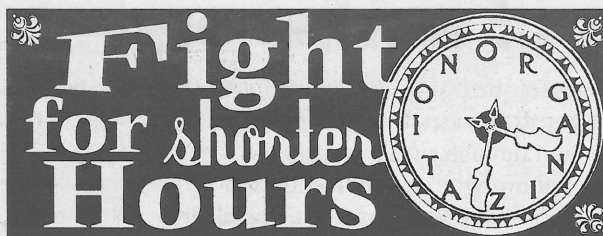
When the Labor Department refused to schedule a public hearing on its proposal to gut overtime laws (see May *IW*), unions reserved one of its public auditoriums for their own hearing. Officials cancelled the reservation as soon as they learned the subject of the planned meeting, so unions rallied outside the department's offices June 30.

Part of a belated campaign that swung into motion only as the public comment period drew to a close, union officials noted that the rule changes could cost more than 8 million workers their limited protections against overtime, and violated the stated objectives of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Some 80,000 workers filed comments with the Department of Labor opposing the proposed regulations. The comments – most from rank-and-file workers, many who do not belong to unions – are passionate in their demand for protection against overtime.

Numerous studies have found that workers exempt from overtime protection put in some of the longest hours in the country. Unfortunately, the AFL campaign focuses on the loss of overtime pay, rather than on the need to hold the line against increased hours.

The House failed to approve a budget amendment that would have blocked the new regulations by a three-vote margin, with seven



Democrats absent – including Richard Gephardt, who was in Iowa garnering an endorsement from the Machinists union for his bid for the presidential nomination.

AFL legislative director Bill Samuels said he “was disappointed by the vote,” but hoped to win in the Senate. Bush has vowed to veto any measure containing the provision. The Labor Department is expected to issue final regulations in the next six months.

Is work taking over our lives?

BY JOE ROBINSON, ALTERNET

Even as the Bush administration attacks overtime rules, Americans are working more hours than at any time since the 1920s.

Some 63 percent of Americans log more than 40 hours a week, according to a new survey by the Internet travel company Expedia.com. Two other polls found that nearly 40 percent of Americans work more than 50 hours per week. We work 2.5 more weeks a year on the job than the Japanese and up to three months more than the Europeans. The average family now puts in four months more on the job in total hours each year than in 1979. For my money, the biggest threat to family values is the hostile takeover by work of every inch of our lives.

The administration wants to eliminate the 40-hour week for millions, by expanding the definition of exempt employees to include anyone who holds a position of responsibility.

But if they want to change labor law, how about starting with vacations? We're the only country in the industrialized world without a minimum paid-leave law. The Europeans have laws requiring four or five weeks of paid leave each year. The Japanese are guaranteed two weeks. Even the Chinese have a three-week vacation policy. Here, whether or not you get vacation is completely up to employers, most of whom would rather have a root canal than okay a vacation schedule.

American workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, get an average of 8.1

days of vacation after one year on the job, and just 10.2 days after three years. Days actually taken may be significantly fewer. Expedia's polling found that Americans hand back \$21 billion in unused vacation time to their employers each year, because they have too much work to take time off.

Research shows that all the extra hours don't produce much more than runaway medical bills and retention costs. One study found that someone who works seven 50-hour weeks in a row will get no more done than someone who works seven 40-hour weeks. Fatigued brains on an MRI scan look like those of people who are sound asleep.

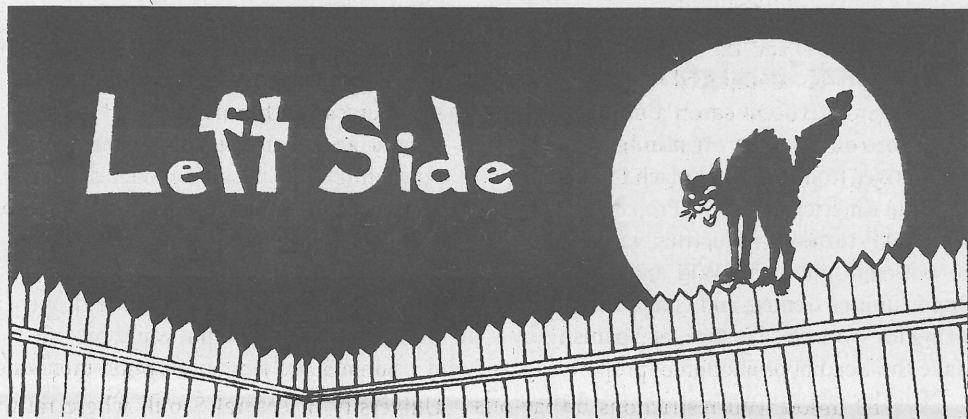
Long hours do produce more stress, though. Research has documented a higher incidence of coronary heart disease in men working more than 48 hours a week. Employees who work overtime report their jobs are highly stressful twice as often as those with regular schedules.

And stress is not merely a nuisance: It's a killer. The Japanese have documented 10,000 cases a year of death by overwork, or *karoshi*, as they call it. Since we work, on average, 100 more hours a year than the Japanese, I'd hate to think what our *karoshi* numbers must be.

But we refuse to see the problem, blinded by an obsession that work style – how long, how hard – is more important than what we accomplish. We somehow think that long hours will translate into higher productivity. But Europe had a higher productivity rate than the U.S. for 14 out of the 19 years between 1981 and 2000. The evidence shows that you can be productive and have a life.

Here's something that should make you a believer: Vacations can keep you alive. An annual vacation can cut the risk of heart attacks in men by 30 percent and in women by 50 percent. It's the perfect antidote to the crushing stress of burnout by regenerating spent emotional resources. But there's a caution: That regeneration process takes about two weeks, so long weekends aren't real vacations.

Don't let fear or guilt cut your vacation short. You are legally entitled to every day of whatever policy your company has on the books. The word vacation comes from the Latin root *vacatio*, which means “freedom.” No citizen of the land of the free needs to feel guilty about exercising an annual bout of liberty. It's time to do as the president does when summer rolls around: Let freedom ring.



FW Redcloud was recently released from the hospital. This column was written some months ago, but did not appear because it was delayed in the mail...

“So many candidates, so much hot air.” So reads a headline on one of the alternative freebies published in the Big Windy. All the spot announcements on the Boob Toob that we have been assailed with bears that out. These candidates spend more time backbiting their competitors than parading their own virtues. All of which bears out my long-held contention that the electoral process is more of a negative process than a positive one. The only way they seem to promote themselves is by parading the faults of their fellow contenders, even if they belong to the same political party, which leaves your scribe with the unmistakable impression that they don't have too much to say for themselves, if anything at all.

In most elections people vote for someone not because that person happens to be their choice, but because they don't want to see the other one win. Every four years there are those among us who get excited over who the next clown in office is going to be while blissfully unaware that the big corporations and chief executive officers do not gain their positions by any popular franchise, but are in for life. Those are the babies who give orders to our duly elected “representatives.”

Face it, fellow workers, our only vote is at the point of production, where we can stymie those who control our lives by withholding our efficiency. It is no coincidence that our union movements have been driven back to ground zero. There are those who may be inclined to accuse your scribe of being unpatriotic. However, I maintain that I am a better patriot than most flag wavers. While it may be that I don't give a cockroach's phlatus whoever the duly elected representatives of Freedomland may be, I am much concerned about our denuded forests, our industrially polluted waterways and oceans, not to mention that most of us can't afford to buy our own homes anymore.

It is said that everybody has the vote, but what do we get to vote on? Are we asked to vote on the rising cost of living, on our taxes, on the waste of our natural resources, or whether the cream of our youth are being sent to perish in foreign battlefields? No. But we can vote on a bunch of pussbutts who take their orders from the unelected corporations. One way from the century before last, an American at that, came up with the quip: “If elections changed anything, they would be made illegal.” When voting, all we are doing is giving a vote of confidence for the status quo.

Don't vote, it only encourages them!

“Why says crime doesn't pay?” asks Jackie Mason, one of the last vestiges of Yiddish humor. He goes on to say that if someone burglarizes a home or holds up a filling station, they run the risk of being apprehended and serving a long prison term or being shot. Those who run the large corporations can get away with stealing millions or even billions of dollars, and only get a bit of unfavorable print in the media but never anywhere near a prison. Of course, you know who foots the bill for their robberies – all that is passed on to those of us who belong to the producing class.

It has been said that the politician gets votes from the poor and money from the rich on the promise of protecting each from the other; needless to say, it can easily be surmised which gift has more influence. Don't waste your time going to the polls and letting the parasites know that we haven't woken up as yet. Our only vote is at the point of production, where, by withholding our efficiency, we can strike a fatal blow in the pocket book.

Draftees of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your generals (and your parasites)!

— C.C. Redcloud

Medieval Peasants
WORKED LESS
Than you do!



 **Take Back Your Time Day**
www.timeday.org



Prison locked down to break strike

Prison officials locked down some 1,100 prisoners at the Sterling Correctional Facility in Colorado July 1 after dozens of inmate cooks went on strike to protest wage cuts. A SWAT-style "special operations response team" was also dispatched to the prison. It was the first strike by inmates at a Colorado prison since 1978.

Ghosts from page 1

now had the tools handed to them by the Taft-Hartley law; the legal hiring of replacement workers during a strike, and outlawing sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts being the most devastating parts of this new law for organized labor.

John L. Lewis declared this law the beginning of fascism in the U.S. If fascism is defined as a marriage of corporations and government in order to control the rest of us, that marriage had been growing stronger for 100 years before the Taft-Hartley law was passed. Ask the Ludlow miners.

In November 1990, CF&I declared bankruptcy and the mill was purchased by Oregon Steel Mills. OSM also owns mills in Napa, California, and Portland, Oregon, and has joint ownership in Camrose Pipe in Alberta, Canada. When the USWA called a strike at OSM's Portland mill in 1983, the company immediately hired replacement workers and broke the strike. The union was decertified and the Portland mill still operates non-union.

After buying the mill in Pueblo, OSM refused to honor its union agreements. Many workers were forced to work 80-hour weeks, as many as 36 days in a row. The company bragged it was breaking production records with 300 less people. Injuries mounted. OSM was later fined \$487,000 by OSHA for numerous safety violations after a wall-to-wall investigation following two fatalities in 10 months: a broken neck in May 1999 and a truck driver burned to death by hot billets in February 2000. \$487,000 is a record settlement for safety violations in Colorado.

After contract negotiations broke down, the U.S.W.A. set up picket lines on October 3, 1997. The strike was called for Unfair Labor Practices when OSM refused to discuss pensions, health benefits for retirees, or overtime, seniority and job classifications. OSM began hiring replacements immediately and was soon operating with 700 scabs and 100 union crossovers (super scabs).

Most workers felt defeated and voted to return to work on December 30, 1997. OSM refused the offer but did rehire 30 of the 1,000 who walked out. Almost six years later, the USWA is still negotiating, trying to save the families who still don't have jobs. And the working class protests – weakly.

There is an ongoing corporate campaign that has been somewhat effective. Wells Fargo Bank has been providing OSM loans to keep it afloat through the strike. Corporations do practice solidarity. The AFL-CIO has withdrawn millions of dollars in pension funds from Wells Fargo. BART, San Francisco's rapid transit system, refused to renew a large contract due to a significant deterioration in the quality of OSM rails. OSM was found guilty

In order to help close a state government budget shortfall of \$1 billion, prisoners' pay was dropped from as much as \$2 a day to a flat rate of 60 cents. Inmate workers do everything from custodial work to laundry and cooking. Twenty percent of these paltry wages are deducted to pay child support, victim compensation fees and court fines.

When the first shift of 15 cooks was called from their cells to start preparing breakfast at 3 a.m., all refused to work until the wage cuts were rescinded. When two more shifts of cooks also refused to work, the west side of the Sterling facility was placed in lockdown.

During lockdowns, prisoners receive cold meals in their cells, phones are turned off and visitation rights are stopped. Prisoners are denied recreation privileges and do not get to shower. In addition to trying to pressure the striking cooks by mistreating their fellow prisoners, prison officials have launched an investigation into who organized the strike. A prison spokesman said organizers could be sent to administrative segregation, lose earned release time, or transferred to a higher security prison.

The east half of the Sterling prison was not placed in lockdown, although about half of the food service workers there also joined the strike and were placed in segregation.

in 1998 of over 100 unfair labor practices by the NLRB, and the state of Colorado is suing it for clean air violations, but OSM continues operating with scabs and union workers continue to hope the courts will save them. While the working class is doing – what? Begging?

Corporations are waging all-out class war on workers, but it seems that only one class takes this war seriously. Where is our solidarity? In our songs? Where is the idea that "an injury to one is an injury to all"? In our rhetoric? No matter the initials we organize under, if we don't begin to react as "one big union" we will all be in sweatshops again, and soon.

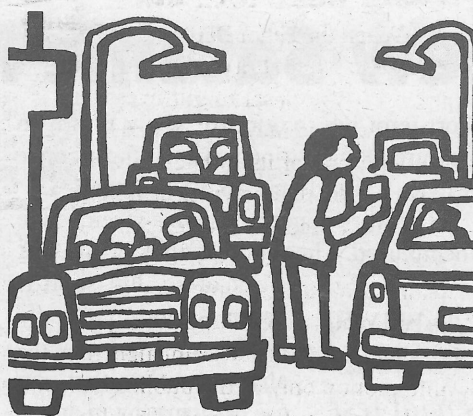
We have come full circle. From Ludlow in 1914, when the corporations ruled absolutely, to winning some comfort, dignity and safety, and now back to total corporate control, as in Pueblo, in 2003. I just wrote another letter to Coca-Cola begging them to stop murdering union organizers at their bottling plant in Colombia. Ghosts of Ludlow? Another to Wal-Mart begging them to stop forcing young girls to live in guarded company compounds, producing clothes and toys at starvation wages for eager U.S. consumers. Ghosts of Ludlow?

Do I think begging will work? Do I think the courts or the politicians or the laws will save us? Ask Ludlow miners whose side those guys are on. Ask any worker who has had his pension stolen, his job shipped to China or his union busted whose side the courts and politicians are on. Unions are spending millions trying to organize young workers and finding it increasingly difficult. Maybe if we began acting like unions again and stopped backing down from the corporations, workers would break our doors down to belong.

If we do not have the courage or the insight to begin fighting back as a class, we deserve the future we are getting. Only we working people, when we stop letting the bosses divide us – when we begin to see that all working people belong to one class, whether the corporations rent our backs, our minds or our talent, whether we live in Greece, the U.S.A. or Colombia, whether we are black, brown or green, whether we are Baptist, Catholic or agnostic – can defend ourselves, our families and each other from the highly organized and powerful international corporations that exist today.

If we allow each group of workers to be picked off one at a time and we do not understand where that leads, we deserve our fate.

The only defense we have ever had is to act when our fellow workers are being raped. I'm old fashioned, but I liked myself better when union meant caring for one another. If we all have to fold our arms at one time and shut down the whole damn works to let them know we're not powerless, let's do it.



Hyundai workers win 8-hour strike

After a seven-week wave of quickie strikes which cost Hyundai Motors more than \$1.2 billion in lost output, the automaker agreed to adopt a five-day, 40-hour workweek starting Sept. 1, maintaining wages and days off.

Despite government efforts to force workers to give up pay and holidays in exchange for the 40-hour week, Korean unionists won similar agreements from more than 100 major manufacturing firms, prompting the Federation of Korean Industries to withdraw its opposition to the government's 40-hour law and urge its rapid adoption.

Meanwhile, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions announced that the two organizations have agreed on a unified proposal to increase the current number of monthly and yearly paid holidays while maintaining basic wage levels.

The FKI bitterly criticized the Hyundai settlement, which it said "granted the labor union the right to veto important management decisions, and thus encroaches upon the constitutional protection of property rights."

The union won restrictions on lay-offs due to new technology or reduced sales, a retirement age of 58, and the right to be consulted on certain management decisions. The government, headed by a former labor lawyer, said the settlement "restricts the company's managerial rights excessively and hurt its flexibility in employment."

The agreement also provides for time-and-a-half pay for extra hours on the day shift and double-time pay for extra hours at night, and raises workers' average pay to \$42,000 a year. The pending legislation would allow employers to work workers overtime without penalty. Unions have vowed to mount a general strike if the legislation is approved in its current form.

New anti-labor laws

In an attempt to curb unions' growing power, South Korea's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy has proposed "reform" measures that would strengthen management rights, including easing restrictions on dismissing workers, allowing the hiring of scabs during strikes, outlawing industry-wide demonstrations, and providing for legal regulation of unions' internal affairs. Another provision would require postal ballots before a union could declare a strike.

"Our labor laws at present concentrate too much on protecting workers and not enough on advancing productivity and promoting peaceful labor relations. We must modify this system if we are to meet international industrial standards," a ministry official said.

Modelled after the British system, the postal ballot would require unions to go through a lengthy, government-controlled system before legal strike action could be taken. The government also hopes the system would break up workers' spirit of collective solidarity, encouraging more individualistic "rational" decisions.

The traditionally conservative Federation of Korean Trade Unions condemned the proposals as "an undemocratic and outmoded idea" which would undermine unions' independence and open the door to fraud.

Police break rail strike

Nearly 1,000 railroad workers were arrested June 28 as tens of thousands of riot police stormed university campuses and other sites across South Korea June 28 to break up a strike against privatization plans.

While nearly all strikers defied a government order to return to work June 29, unions abandoned the strike July 1 in the face of threats to fire all workers who remained on strike. The government plans to fire 121 union leaders for their part in the strike.

Some 5,400 riot police burst into Yonsei University in central Seoul, where railway workers were staging a sit-in. Police hauled off 650 workers for questioning but union president Jeon Hwan-Kyu and others were among some 3,000 workers who fled the scene minutes before the attack.

Police also attacked strikers in several other cities. Railway authorities said 618 of the 5,000 strikers returned to work following the attacks.

The strike, which shut down nearly the entire rail network, was called after the government violated a pledge to negotiate with workers before proceeding with plans to privatize the rail network. The strike was called the day after a parliamentary committee approved the privatization scheme.

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Education's new Satanic Mills

An article by a necessarily anonymous Wobbly leads the July 4 issue of *The New Hampshire Gazette*, reporting on the "mind-mills" proliferating in converted New England textile mill buildings. Excerpts follow:

An interesting example is Measured Progress of Dover. Housed in part of the ground floor of the old Clarostat building, a huge red brick pile next to the Cocheco River, Measured Progress is part of the booming commercial school testing industry.

A number of states have contracted with Measured Progress to develop and grade – or "code" in industry jargon – tests for their students. In the just-concluded session, math, writing and reading comprehension tests for 3rd, 6th and 10th graders in New Hampshire and Louisiana were coded. Measured Progress has other grading sites in other states.

The workers are mostly a congenial bunch. Some are recent college graduates. Others need to supplement irregular income from their true passion as writers or musicians, or are stop-gapping while changing careers. And some move fluidly from one

short-term job to another. Many return to Measured Progress for a month of work once or twice a year despite its \$9.75 wage.

The work appears desirable when you're unemployed. Then it's tolerable for the first week or so. But soon it becomes mind-numbingly unpleasant. And eventually you realize that you are participating in an intellectually dishonest enterprise.

This is a four-week assignment. The job becomes more stressful each

day as workers try to grade fairly while being urged to grade more quickly. Perhaps the work is deliberately structured to last four weeks to prevent burnout. Or perhaps it's because after four weeks and one day, a laid-off worker would qualify for unemployment.

In the math and reading comprehension tests, each student's handwritten answer has been scanned into a computer. The scorers sit, each with their own computer, at tables of nine or ten workers and one Quality Control supervisor. These are not the "fill in the bubble" tests you may remember; students must show their work in math, sometimes

including diagrams, and write full sentences in the language tests. The coder reads an answer, assigns a score, and enters it into their computer, whereupon the system provides the next answer to be scored. The system records how many tests each worker grades each hour. Those worker scores are used in management decisions to terminate employment.

The coding of the writing tests is somewhat different: computers offer no advantage, so the coder handles a photocopy of the four pages from each student's test booklet.

Each student is evaluated on a half-dozen characteristics and given an overall score by a first reader. Then that score is covered by a blank sticky note and the essay is returned to the pile to be redrawn by a second reader. The Quality Control supervisor receives the essays after this "double-blind" coding and compares the overall scores. A difference of more than 1 point on the 6-point scale requires that the supervisor conduct a "negotiation" between the scorers. This would take valuable time, so the supervisor often just makes his or her own determination.

The quota is about 15 essays per hour – not difficult if they're short, but very difficult if you get several four-page essays. This is particularly true given issues of legibility and

syntax, not to mention spelling. A recent run of 6th grade essays contained the following variations on the work "schedule": scedule, schudeale, scejwol, sechugel, schugal, segial and sechudle.

This is hard mental work. The coders try to be fair to the student while adhering to the standards – unique to each state – that determine the student's overall grade. But fatigue is inevitable. Just as it used to be a joke among American auto buyers that they should avoid buying cars assembled on a Friday or Monday, the coders pretty much agree that their performance falls off sharply by midafternoon each day. And regardless of the time of day, once a coder has read a hundred essays on the same topic a certain lack of sympathy arises for any student who believes he or she is expressing an original idea. Believe me, we've already read that, too many times.

Physically, the company is run exactly like a mill. A hundred of more workers stream into the front door before 8 a.m. Each stops to be checked off the roster by the receptionist. By 8:05 everyone is at work. Precisely at 10 everyone stands and, weather permitting, most go outside. At 10:15 building reentry. 12:00 lunch. 12:30 building reentry. 2:15 break. 2:30 building reentry. 4 p.m. end of work.

All doors are kept electronically locked, allegedly for test security. But it's not likely that a 6th grader could slip in and grade their own test, or that a box of 500 essays would be stolen. Locked doors simply reinforce the notion of total employer control.

The physical surroundings are your basic exposed brick walls and industrial carpeting, with the large mill floor broken up by dividers. The chairs are comfortable. But the ventilation is chancy – windows can not be opened, so comfort depends on the diligence of the unsmiling office boy who controls the thermostat key. The fluorescent lighting provokes eyestrain, and many workers use aspirin daily. The noise, particularly when a group is being trained on a new question, can rise to concentration-shattering heights.

Ultimately, this model for the grading of standardized tests is unfair to both the students who take the tests and the workers who grade them. Because Measured Progress is a business, it seeks maximum productivity at minimum cost; hence the speedup of the assembly line. But a sincere test answer imperfectly expressed may take an extra half-minute to evaluate. This conflict is unavoidable when corporate values are applied to educational systems. Industrial capitalism and education simply have different goals.

But capitalism is endlessly adaptive, constantly seeking opportunities to provide new goods and services. And the state is eager to subcontract responsibilities, to privatize tasks. The latest train wreck at the intersection of these value systems is this idea of standardized school testing.

Students' educational achievements are assessed in seconds. Measured Progress's contract with New Hampshire was for nearly \$2.5 million to test 48,874 students this year. That's \$50 and change per student. Coders earn about 65 cents for each essay graded; perhaps half that for each math test, and a staggering one cent for each reading comprehension answer. So out of that \$50 cost/student, they pay workers just under \$1 to grade the tests.

To be fair, there is a lot involved: tests must be devised in consultation with each state. The test must be administered, shipped and scanned into computers. New questions must be field-tested and scored. A year-round staff of a half-dozen or so employees tends to this process. Oh, and the business is profitable enough to lease a very large space only to use it for a couple of months each year.

Is this the right way to leave no child behind? Frankly, in the commercial test world most of the kids are left in the dust at the bus stops while the shiny new bus trundles down the road, well-staffed with relief drivers and mechanics.

And when the call goes out for more migrant intellectuals, we dutifully show up at the garage for work.

Is this the right way to leave no child behind? In the commercial test world most of the kids are left in the dust at the bus stops...

Review: Glaberman punches out

Punching Out and Other Writings by Martin Glaberman. Charles H. Kerr, 2002, 231 pages, available from IWW Literature Dept. for \$14.

BY J.D. CRUTCHFIELD, NYC GMB

This collection of essays, reviews, cartoons and poems, compiled by Staughton Lynd, spans nearly fifty years, from just after the WWII to a year before Glaberman's death in 2000. Taken together, these writings provide a fascinating and thought-provoking overview of the work of one of radical labor's most perceptive and clear-thinking minds.

Glaberman was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1918. He graduated from Brooklyn College, and was well on his way to a master's degree in economics from Columbia when he became associated with the "Johnson-Forest Tendency" of C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya within American Trotskyism.

He decided to drop academe for a factory job, as many Trotskyists were doing at the time. He went to Detroit on the eve of WWII, and for the next twenty years he worked in the automobile industry. In the late sixties he returned to academia and earned a Ph.D. Glaberman thus qualifies as that rarest of creatures, the labor academic who actually knows what he's talking about. Glaberman remained an unapologetic Marxist to the last, but his Marxism was of a maverick and rebellious type, more reminiscent of the IWW Preamble than of Stalin or even Trotsky. (In a 1954 essay, he speaks critically of "the Trotskyists" as if he did not include himself among them.)

Constant themes throughout the book are the opposition between workers and bureaucrats, whether in the union or the government, and the bankruptcy of vanguardism, which views the majority of the working class as "backwards" and in need of supervision and direction from above. These are very Marxist views, but may not seem so to readers whose only knowledge of Marx comes through the work of doctrinaire communists.

Revolution, Glaberman repeatedly insists, can come only through the self-activity of ordinary workers as they struggle to control the production process. It is not something that will come some day, when sufficient numbers of workers have developed an "advanced" revolutionary consciousness through careful indoctrination. Rather, it is a process which is going on every day in every workplace, to one degree or another, and which can achieve critical mass unexpectedly at any time, as workers organize themselves in response not to the teachings of theorists, but to the objective conditions of their lives. He holds up the Hungar-

ian revolution of 1956 (successful at home, but overthrown by Russian tanks) and the near-revolution in France in 1968 as examples.

Wobblies will read with satisfaction Glaberman's withering criticism of the business unions' Stalinistic leadership and one-party bureaucratic rule. But he also challenges many ideas that are often heard even in IWW circles. "The Left-Wing Committeeman" profiles a UAW bureaucrat (a "committeeman" at Ford with essentially the same role as a steward elsewhere) who, despite having risen from the rank and file, grew isolated from the workers and found himself more and more regarding them as a problem:

"The whole process is one of keeping workers in line for production and keeping order, and of doing favors for the workers. It adds up to the social worker mentality. ... He knows the workers better than they know themselves. He knows what's best for them."

Those who favor workplace contractualism enforced by shop stewards over the IWW's job branch and shop committee system would do well to study this essay. Some may find a more difficult challenge in another constant theme of these essays, namely that revolutionary consciousness is born of revolutionary activity, and not the other way around. This principle is a refreshing blast against left-wing vanguardism and the "social worker mentality" of reformists in the business unions; but it also challenges the mission-aryism popular among many Wobblies, past and present. Wobblies who hope to build the new society through soap-boxing and "outreach" will find no comfort here.

Glaberman's favorite example, which he experienced first-hand while working in the auto plants, is the wildcat strikes among UAW locals during World War II. Despite adopting a no-strike clause by a two-to-one vote, auto workers engaged in hundreds of unauthorized strikes during the war. What workers thought they believed in, while voting in their homes, turned out to be quite different from what they were willing to do on the job. Glaberman reports asking several pro-pledge co-workers what they were doing on the picket line. "Look what the company is doing to us!" was the inevitable answer.

Similarly, Glaberman rejects the idea that "consciousness" and hiring policies can solve

racial strife. "The need to struggle within the unions against racism and racist practices," he writes, "should not blind either the student or the activist to a sense of historic and economic development. Battles over 'consciousness' in itself have accomplished little here."

Another recurring theme, perhaps the most important, is Glaberman's insistence that the theory and practice of the Left must be constantly revolutionized in response to changing conditions. Repeatedly he criticizes "leaders" and intellectuals whose adherence to programs devised fifty or a hundred years ago leads them to dismiss the actual working class as "back-

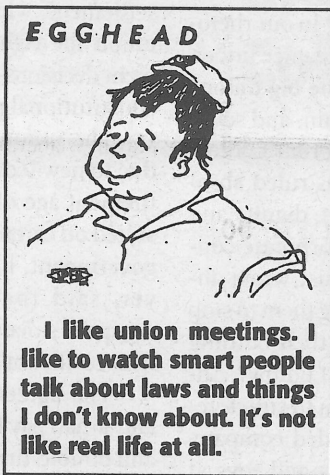
ward," or whose fetishization of abstract concepts like "will" and "idealism" diverts them from the real struggle being waged in workplaces every day. Marxism for Glaberman is not a set of eternal truths and prophecies, but a method of inquiry into objective reality, and as reality changes, so must the conclusions Marxists draw from it.

It is difficult, in a brief review, to do justice to the scope and depth of this wide-ranging collection (though Lynd's 12-page introduction takes a right good stab at it). Glaberman's discussions of race, James, Marx, the "New Left" of the 1960s, the revolutionary movements of the post-war industrial world and more are all deeply interesting and instructive, but impossible to treat adequately here. The book, in short, is required reading for every labor unionist.

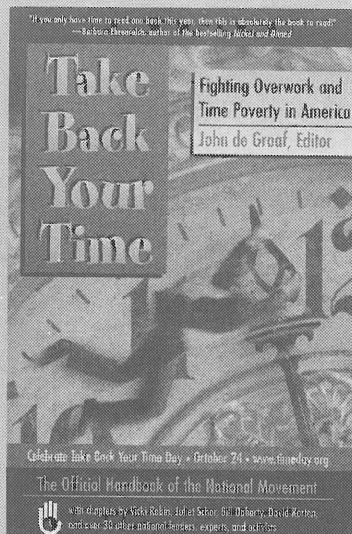
Glaberman concludes the title essay of the book as follows (and in these days of self-imposed ignorance it's necessary to point out that, writing in 1952, Glaberman used the generic term "men" to mean "free human beings" – many of his best examples of "men" asserting their power on the job are about women):

"In all this the new society appears within the old. A society in which the workers, every one of them, takes his part in planning production, in carrying out the plan, in developing himself by helping his fellow men, in helping society by developing himself. It means the total reorganization of society inside the factory and outside the factory, a society of freely associated men under no one's domination."

Every member of the I. W. W. can recognize a kindred mind in that. It is a mind with much to teach us.



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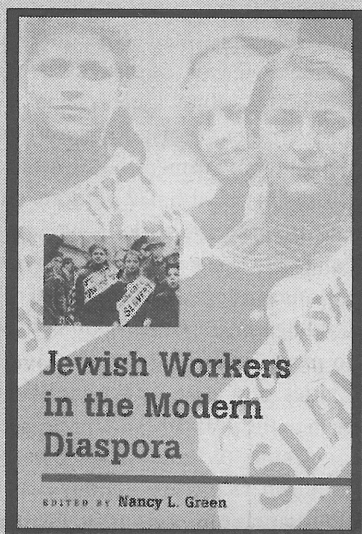
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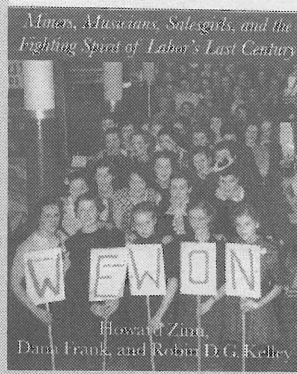
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Unionization rate falls

Just 13.2 percent of workers were union members in 2002, down from 13.5 percent the year before. The number has been dropping steadily since the 1950s, despite surveys that indicate that a majority of workers want to join unions.

U.S. labor laws and court rulings exclude more than 30 million workers from union representation - so-called independent contractors, low-level supervisors, farmworkers, civil servants in states that prohibit collective bargaining, federal workers barred from bargaining rights by the Bush administration in the name of national security, and others.

Flight attendants go indy

Northwest Airlines flight attendants have bolted the Teamsters for a new independent union, the Professional Flight Attendants Association, in one of the largest decertification votes in the history of the Teamsters.

The vote follows sexist slurs against the attendants at Teamster conventions, a trusteeship of their local, and attempts to force through a weak contract over strong rank-and-file opposition. "Hoffa essentially drove 11,000 Teamsters out of the union, 75 percent of them women, by refusing to deal with their issues or their elected leaders," said TDU National Organizer Ken Paff.

Tyson strikers still fighting

In the small town of Jefferson, Wisconsin, 470 workers have been on strike against the Tyson Foods sausage and pepperoni plant since Feb. 28, determined not to allow their employer to gut their wages and health plan. There have been no negotiations since the strike began, and Tyson is running the plant with a skeleton crew of imported scabs.

"They figure that this is the time to take money out of our pockets and put it back in theirs," striker Chuck Moehling told the *New York Times*. "The fact that they're making record profits doesn't seem to matter."

Companies across the U.S. are demanding wage freezes, lower starting pay, stingier pensions and higher health premiums in the most aggressive push for concessions since the 1980s. Even General Electric, with \$45,000 in profits per worker, demanded health-care concessions in recent negotiations.

Tyson doesn't even pretend that it needs the concessions. Vice president Ken Kimbro says the company just wants to get the plant's costs in line with its other plants.

That's why Tyson is demanding a wage freeze in Jefferson and wants to cut starting pay to \$9 an hour, from \$11.10. Tyson also wants to gut health coverage, reduce vacations and freeze pensions.

"We're not pleading poverty," Kimbro said. "We're not saying the Jefferson facility is losing money. We're saying the cost in Jefferson is out of line and we have to make adjustments."

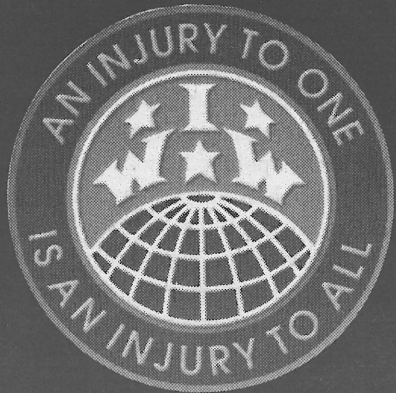
David's Jade Palace strike

Waiters at David's Jade Palace in Hartsdale, N.Y., have been on strike since May. They were fired by owner David Eng after demanding payment of stolen tips, union recognition and better working conditions. Waiters organized into the self-managed, independent 318 Restaurant Workers Union. Money is needed to help pay strikers' transportation and other expenses directly related to strike activities, and can be sent to the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops for the "Justice Will Be Served Campaign": PO Box 130293, New York NY 10013-0995.

Outsourcing high-tech jobs

IBM has announced plans to move thousands of high tech jobs to India and China; part of a larger, long-term trend. Companies have found they can export jobs ranging from data entry to programming and sophisticated software engineering. Forrester Research says that in the next 15 years 3.3 million U.S. service-industry jobs, including 472,000 in computer services, will move to countries like India - "outsourcing" \$136 billion in wages.

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General strike protests Chile's "socialist" austerity

More than 100,000 workers and students took to the streets August 13, in Chile's first general strike since a 1986 strike aimed at toppling the Pinochet dictatorship. However, government threats of fines and other reprisals kept most workers on the job, blunting the strike's effect.

Chile's biggest union, the 640,000 member Central Workers Union (CUT), called the strike to protest the government's neoliberal economic program and demand greater respect for labor rights.

"In Chile we have a take-home minimum wage of about 80,000 pesos [\$113] a month - nobody can live on that," said CUT organizer Cijifredo Vera. The earnings gap between the rich and the poor is very wide, even compared with other countries in the region, and has been growing rapidly as an economic "recovery" bolsters the earnings of the rich and middle class.

Construction workers, transportation workers, teachers and health workers were among those who stopped work. Riot police used water cannon and unleashed teargas against strikers in the capital, Santiago, and street skirmishes continued into the late afternoon. More than 200 were arrested.

Protests were also held in Santiago, Arica, Iquique, Talca, Valparaiso, Concepcion, Temuco and Valdivia, where serious confrontations with police occurred.

Striker Maria Guzman told the *Guardian* newspaper: "We had lots of hope for this socialist government - but they have only worked with the right and the businessmen and not with us, the poor."

Lula attacks workers

Thousands of government workers protested in the streets of Brazil's capital August 6 and called President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva a traitor after Congress gutted the public pensions system. The "reforms" will cut benefit levels and require workers to put in many more years on the job before retiring.

"This is the biggest treachery I have had in my life," said Fatima Mesquita, a retired 50-year-old worker who traveled 1,250 miles from the tropical state of Ceara for the protest. "I could never have imagined this, Lula came to my city and said he would recover the dignity of public workers."

A reported 1,500 mounted riot police surrounded Brazil's Congress building with metal barriers as more than 25,000 workers marched under the blistering sun. They were carrying an effigy of Lula which they put in a coffin.

Bosses: The more they're paid the worse they do

A study commissioned by the Labor Council of New South Wales has found that while CEO pay exploded in the last decade, there is no link between high executive pay and company performance.

Australian executive pay increased from 22 times average weekly earnings in 1992 to 74 times average weekly earnings last year. In the finance sector, CEOs earn 188 times the salary of customer service staff. However, these high pay levels actually coincide with a lower bottom line.

"If you look at the numbers, it is accurate to say the more you pay a CEO the worse the company performs and the less you pay the better it performs," says researcher Dr John Shields of Sydney University's School of Business, who worked on the study.

Taiwan rail workers to strike

The Taiwan Railway Labor Union has vowed to strike during the Moon Festival Sept. 11, unless the government withdraws privatization plans. Twelve thousand of the rail system's 14,000 workers voted in favor of illegal strike action after the government refused to consider workers' objections to the scheme. The government has threatened to discipline any worker who joins the strike.



Indian workers losing right to strike?

Recent court decisions have seriously undermined Indian workers' rights.

The Supreme Court of India ruled August 6 that government workers have no "fundamental, legal, moral or equitable right to go on strike." That case arose when the southern state of Tamil Nadu told more than one million workers they would be fired unless they abandoned a strike against its decision to slash pension benefits.

The strike began July 1. Three days later, the government issued a law permitting it to summarily dismiss strikers. Hundreds of workers were also arrested as part of efforts to break the strike, which collapsed when lower courts refused to block the firings.

Six days later, the Bombay High Court issued an order prohibiting four unions representing Oil & Natural Gas Corporation workers from carrying out a strike protesting the death of 25 workers in a helicopter crash.

ONCG chairman Subir Raha has refused to meet with unions over the issue, saying he fears for his life.

Workers attribute the crash to a lack of proper safety measures, and have demanded Raha's suspension pending a full enquiry. They are also demanding death benefits, and jobs for family members of the workers killed.

In view of the court ruling, workers began a slowdown on offshore platforms Au-

gust 13, bringing production to less than half of normal levels. Unions noted that this was a 'tool down agitation,' and not a strike.

Nearly 170,000 workers were initially fired in Tamil Nadu, although most were reinstated after a lower court ordered the release of imprisoned strikers and urged individual review of the dismissals. Strikers were required to submit letters of apology and await a government decision on their case.

The government continues to insist on the dismissal of 6,072 workers charged with encouraging the strike. The Supreme Court ruling harkens back to the days when labor unions were viewed as criminal conspiracies, holding that no "organisation can claim a right to paralyse the economic and industrial activities of a state or the nation or inconvenience the citizens."

Centre of Indian Trade Unions Secretary Swadesh Dev Roye condemned the ruling, noting that the "right to strike has been realized by the trade union movement through protracted bitter struggles at the cost of the lives of the martyrs. A basic right contained through struggles shall have to be protected with still bitter struggles." The All India Trade Union Congress, said the right to strike was sacrosanct the world over, and called an emergency congress to respond. Several unions have proposed a general strike.

UK unions demand right to boot fascists

British unions are demanding the right to kick out fascists, after an employment tribunal awarded £5,700 to a train driver expelled by Aslef after it learned he was a member of the fascist British National Party. The BNP has advised members to infiltrate unions, and sue if they are expelled.

Aslef expelled Jay Lee after he stood as BNP council candidate, joined anti-Islamic rallies, and threatened members of the Anti-Nazi League. Aslef's constitution bars membership to "members of, supporters of, or sympathisers with, organisations which are diametrically opposed to the objects of the union, such as a fascist organisation."

Lee sued, claiming his expulsion violated labor laws passed 11 years ago by the Tory government, prohibiting unions from excluding workers from membership unless "entirely attributable to his conduct."

South Korean teachers challenge war-mongering

A peace curriculum developed by the Korea Teachers and Educational Workers Union in response to the U.S. attacks on Iraq drew complaints from principals and U.S. officials until it was withdrawn after the Iraqi government's collapse.

One test question asked students which of the following descriptions of America is incorrect: 1) The world's leading arms-exporting country. 2) The world's most heavily nuclear-armed country. 3) The world's leader in chemical weapons research. 4) The world's most peace-loving country that never once was at war with other countries.

This was the first of a series of cases lodged by the BNP: a Gateshead postal worker is seeking damages after being expelled by the Communication Workers Union and a former warder, sacked for wearing Nazi badges on his uniform, is suing the Prison Officers Association because it refused to represent him. Motions to expel fascists are under consideration by several other unions.

Thus far, the "Labor" government has ignored appeals from unions to revise the legislation to allow unions to exclude fascists.

The Communication Workers Union is among the unions campaigning to change the law, noting that it is a "democratic and human right" to exclude racists from membership. Delegates at the union's annual conference noted that racism is on the increase, and that many refugees have been assaulted in recent months.

The curriculum also included graphic photos from the 1991 Persian Gulf War of Baghdad in flames and injured Iraqi children.

"It is necessary to teach students about the consequences of war and why humankind should oppose any kind of war," said Park Seok Gyun, a high school teacher in Koyang. Park said he not only gave his students the quiz but also showed them video footage of antiwar activists who had gone to Baghdad as "human shields."

"I didn't consider this to be anti-American," he added. "It was teaching students the difference between right and wrong."

Swazi general strike

One unionist was beaten to death by security forces August 13 on the first day of a three-day general strike by Swazi labour federations. South African unionists shut down the Mananga border gate in solidarity, and picketed other border posts.

The strike was timed to coincide with the Global Smart Partnership International Dialogue Summit, a conference on sustainable development which opened with a gala banquet hosted by King Mswati III.

Police blocked a march by workers to the Smart Partnership Summit Village, where they had planned to give delegates flyers listing the failings of King Mswati's rule.

"One out of four Swazis will be without food by 2004. Our economy is in tatters. There are no jobs. Thirty-eight percent of Swazis have HIV or AIDS," said Thandi Mabuza, a protesting worker in the capital, Mbabane.

Police attacked demonstrators across the country. In Mbabane, police dispersed thousands of protestors with rubber bullets, tear gas and batons. In the eastern sugar plantation region, police fired live ammunition at agricultural workers trying to rally.

Schools, banks and businesses were closed, and electricity was intermittent. In a change of tactic from previous strikes, unions kept the bus system operating. "We used to stop the buses to discourage strike-breakers, but police would stop the buses we hired to transport our people to demonstrations. The only way we can travel is by public transport, with the general public," an organizer said.

Fiji police arrest striking union tuna workers

Fiji police arrested six union officials in mid-August as a strike by more than 600 employees of a state-owned tuna cannery continued into its second week, releasing them after several hours of interrogation. Riot police have also been dispatched to picket lines in an effort to intimidate strikers.

The Labour Ministry has declared the strike illegal, part of a pattern of state-sponsored union-busting that has repeatedly led unions in the region to threaten to block all transport of goods in and out of the island nation. Local villagers and carrier drivers have joined picket lines to make sure scabs do not enter the cannery.

Serbian economy in ruins

BY SASHA GRUBANOVIC

More than 10,000 workers marched June 25, warning the government that it would face "militant syndicalism" if its reforms continue to generate layoffs, corrupt privatization and poverty.

"This is a protest against the obvious ruin of the Serbian economy and, therefore, our own ruin. The workers of Serbia are hungry, and we can't stand it any more," said Milenko Smiljanic, head of the Association of Independent Trade Unions, the largest union in Serbia.

The government has continued the neoliberal economic reforms led by former Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, who was assassinated on March 12, and supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Two and a half years after entering this path, one million workers are unemployed, and tens of thousands more lose their jobs each month.

Smiljanic warned that unless the government changes policy, "unions will lose control over social dissatisfaction. ... The government could face militant syndicalism, social unrest, even violence, in the streets," Smiljanic said, to the background of a new pop song called "The Government Falls."

U.S. exports union-busting

A U.S. law firm that prides itself on busting unions has been handed a key role in drafting labor laws for post-Taliban Afghanistan.

The firm, Dechert, is supplying one of the lead lawyers to the Afghanistan Transitional Commercial Law Project. Dechert's web site boasts of its efforts to "help employers maintain a union-free environment."